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BI-CENTENNIAL ORATION

MADE IN

WEST BROOKFIELD, JULY 4, 1860.

AT THE CELEBRATION OF THE

TWO HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY

OF THE SETTLEMENT OF THE

TOWN OF BROOKFIELD.

BY LYMAN WHITING, D.D.

A NATIVE OF NORTH BROOKFIELD.

WEST BROOKFIELD:
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TO THE
INHABITANTS NOW LIVING
AND WHO MAY HEREAFTER DWELL IN THE PRECINCTS OF THE ANCIENT

QUABOAG, "ALIJAS BROOKEFEILD,"

HIS OWN LOVED BIRTH-PLACE,

THE AUTHOR

DEDICATES THIS LABORIOUS BUT LOVED TASK.

LYMAN WHITING.



ORATION.

This is a day for salutations. A family, scattered through a nation have come home. Faces and names are recalled, and by-gone scenes connected with them spring up in irrepressible, glad surprises. Half-forgotten acquaintances of youth, like vines after gleanings, hiding here and there a cluster overlooked, but ripened to peculiar sweetness, are found by each one of us. The ancient hills, the old rocks and trees smile their recognitions. The bright brooks chatter their greetings from grassy banks, and *old* homesteads, a few,—and *new* ones, many,—offer winning welcomes from opened gate and door. A glad accost beams alike from the face of nature and of all the dwellers in this endeared town-home.

“Welcome home!” *you* say. “Glad to come home!” *we* reply, for

“Joyfully dear is the homeward track,
If we are but sure of a welcome back.”

The Third Jubilee, since English hands and hearts made these fields, hills, and valleys the scenes of love’s great care and toil, has come. We, the heirs of the costly estate, assemble to

cherish and rejoice in it. It is fitting that we exchange hearty salutations.

This done, the serious heed of history must be assumed, and reverently we take up the tasks of the hour. Beginning, like curious children, at the mother's knee, we ask first, *How this came to be a town?* What led our fathers here? What fixed their choice for this as their abode? *Why was Brookfield settled?*

These questions will find replies in part further back than record or tradition reaches. In that Infinite Counsel which turns the hearts of men as rivers of water are turned, is a cause underlying all others; and though grand visible laws may disclose the methods, and men may seem to be the only actors, we really do little in stating the truth of any history, though of just a single town like this, until we discern a higher power and wisdom, and plans shaped by both than any man or class of men have devised. God *is* in history, — in that of a township as distinctly as in that of an empire.

The great and terrible forces impelling our forefathers to the New World, you all well know. The impulses which scattered the children of the first emigrants, and the new-come emigrations after the earliest, from the first homes along the sea-coast, — are not as familiar. We, looking at their case, a slender chain of settlements clinging to the sea-side, as if needing land and sea both, to supply daily food; or as if, tarrying on the threshold of the continent, so they could more readily flee back, if they could not stay here, — naturally ask, Why do not those coming after, in equal prudence, stay with this line of plantations, where certain sustenance, and all the comforts — scanty and poor, indeed — which the new world had, were gathered? Instead of this, from all the sea-side settlements, the impulse for a westward and inland migration carried nearly

all of the second generation from the half-furnished and half-protected homes of their fathers, into the deep wilderness. It is a constant question in perusing the story of that generation, what shaped these paths of most daring, and seemingly needless removals? No doubt the marked Saxon love of land, the craving for soil, in which traditional aristocracy, dignity, and weight of character united; and the common pride of possession and sense of independence, pushed the young men of those times into the wild lands where occupancy almost gave possession. Large estates were princely. House lots, in the maritime settlements, were not broad enough for youth with the blood and birth of *Puritan* Pilgrim stirring them. The choice of Quaboag by the inhabitants of Ipswich, who then, as we should think, had ten times more land than they could take care of, well shows this.

The first selection was of lands along the sea-board, as before mentioned, where united the advantages of production and transport, and the twofold resources for sustenance,—land and sea. The broad river, and its rich alluvial basin, with meadows so friendly to tillage; the stream serving as an highway, and the adjacent highlands offering fuel, pasturage and building material was the second choice. The third selection, was the regions of hills and ponds with connecting rivers bordered by facile meadows, lying between. Many of the advantages of sea-shore and river valleys united in these. The historical law of the early settlement was formed essentially of these conditions. Up and down the New England borders, the rugged sea-coast first wins the strangers from the parent land; *their* sons, by a daring plunge, reach the fair Connecticut, and speedily the prosperous settlements adorn the queenly valley; and then, between

these extremities in locality, — if not in qualities of character, others settled upon the midway summits, nestling among these matchless hills and valleys, lying like a basket of pomegranates, in an area of about fifty miles, a family of fruitful hills, exquisitely rounded, and gemmed with clusters of ponds, as fair in beauty as the hills are noble in form.

I wonder not that the river valley first won the companies of land-fanciers, and those searching for pleasing homes. The Queen of that valley was, as now, fair to look upon. Her waving vestments of meadow verdures, her stately coronets of hills and mountains, were enough to captivate her Saxon suitors at a glance. Nor need we deny that among them were many of the choicest spirits who then awaited the call of fields unexplored and of lands unmeasured. But that some, on their journeys thither, discerned the less showy and less winning charms of Quaboag — the land of hills and lakes — sturdier in aspect, and so summoning higher valor in the settler, need not surprise us.

Tidings of this very marked region doubtless found their way to the sea-side settlements through the explorers and leaders of the emigrations to the "River," as its region was then termed; and when the first wave had spent itself at Hartford, Windsor, Springfield and Hadley, the next one paused among the singularly charming swells and meadows of Brookfield.

For fifteen years the rugged path between Dorchester and Cambridge, and the settlements made from them on the River, had been kept open by the infrequent journeyings between these extremes of colonial settlement. But the land-hunger craved fresh spaces. On the 31st of May 1660, in the second year of the Colony of Massachusetts Bay, is found the heading in the margin, "*Ipsuich new plantacon.*"

“In ans^r to the petition of severall the inhabitants of Ipswich, this Court judgeth it meete to graunt the petitioners sixe miles square, or so much land as shall be contejned in such a compasse, in a place nere Quobogg Ponds, provided they haue twenty famlyes there resident wthin three yeeres, & that they haue an able minister settled there wthin the sajd terme, such as this Court shall approve, and that they make due provission in some way or other for the future, either by setting a part of land, or w^t else shall be thought meete for the continuance of the ministry amongst them; and that if they shall faile in any of the particulars aboue mentioned, this graunt of the Court to be voyd & of none effect.”

What did the Ipswich people want of Podunk lands, one hundred miles from their homes? The passion for land, as before named, is partly the answer. Their petition to the General Court begins —

“Forasmuch as it is found by Dayly experience that the common Lands of this Towne (Ipswich) are overburdened by the multiplying dwelling houses contrary to the true intent and meaning of the first Inhabitants in their granting of house lotts and other lands to such as came amongst them, to the end such inconvenience may be prevented” —

From the last run of Western land fever back to earliest annals, the symptoms and forms are much the same. A curious poem, dated twelve years before this grant, entitled “Good News from New England,” so admirably recites the modes of land trade at that day, that I will place a portion of it here :

Delightfull to the eye did lye the woods and medowes greene,
The paths untrod by man and beast, both smooth and elenly scene.
Most men unlanded till this time, for large lands Eages sue,
Had not restraint knockt of their lands, too big their fermes had grew.
Give eare I pray unto the praise set on a new Plantation,
First for the melow sirs says one, I have found such a station.
Where grass doth grow as high as I, round stalkes and very thicke,
No hassocks but a bottom plain, Carts cannot therein stick.

Boates may come up unto our doors, the Creeks convenient lye,
 Fish plenty taken in them are, plains plowable hard by.
 No bush nor roots to hinder them, yet stately timber is,
 In every swamp, yea uplands too, most clobberd trees I wis.
 Clay there for bricke and tile, pot-earth with ease, and store,
 Some men suppose black lead is there, silver and copper o're.
 Carry but guns, and wild fowle will be brought unto our dishes,
 Venison and Moose you there may catch according to your wishes.
 All creatures thrive exceeding well, Goats, Swine, and sheep for meat,
 Horse, Cows, and Calves encrease as well, ther's store of English wheat.
 Five, seven, or nine old Planters doe take up their station first,
 Whose property is not to share unto themselves the worst.
 Their Cottages like Crows nests built, new commers goods attain,
 For mens accommodation sake, they truck their seats for gaine.
 Come buy my house, here you may have, much medow at youre dore,
 'T will be dearer if you stay till, the land be planted o're.
 See you that garden-plat inclos'd, Pumkins there hundreds are,
 Parsnips and roots, with Cabiges, grow in great plenty there.
 Lay out an hundred pound or two, you shall have such a seat,
 When you have planted but one crop. you cannot want for meate.
 This praise doth make the purchaser his gold and silver throw,
 Into his hand for house and land that yet he did not know.
 Unseen, and yet [so] sudden bought, when once the sale was ended,
 His purchase makes him misse of more, with gifts he's not befriended
 One he hath friends to praise his parts, his lot shall larger be,
 For usefull men are highly priz'd, such shall sell two or three.
 Insatiate minds for medow, and best land they could attain,
 Hath caused Townes, land lay by lot, I wish it were not vaine.

—*Mass. Hist. Coll. Vol. I. s. 4.*

It is possible a cabin or two may have sheltered some daring pioneer before this grant, but it is quite doubtful. It was really a land speculation. Room for cattle, and founding a new plantation — a Western Reserve to the emigrants of that day, who would escape the tedious and perilous addition of the journey to the Illinois, — the Connecticut valley.

It proved a rare resolution indeed, under any impulse, to tarry in this settlement. It was a perilous solitude. Thirty miles eastward was Lancaster, as far westward, Springfield, and these not only the nearest but the only neighbors; and strong as were the affections between the settlements, how long in coming must succor be in the day of trouble, through that houseless, roadless,

almost pathless wilderness. Rivers, swamps, dens of wild beasts, and haunts of men more terrible, divided these feeble bands. What a race of Greathearts led and defended the ancestries of these now wide-spread families !

It was a true heroism to tarry a night here, for yonder quiet stream creeping down the valley, like a silver thread, into the Wickaboag, would guide the settler to the "chief seat" of the Nipmues,—but a morning's run distant. This tribe ranged more territory, and were more numerous than any of the New England Indians except the Narragansetts. Elliot, ten years before, spoke of Nipmuck as "A great country lying between Connectacot and the Massachusetts, called Nipnet, where there be many Indians dispersed." The terrible pestilence had, however, crippled the tribe into some subjection to their neighbors who had escaped the scourge. In a letter of William Pynchon to Gov. Dudley, dated May 1648, about some murderers in the region, he says, "There are several small factions of Quaboag, and in all near places there are other small factions. No one faction doth rule all." Gookin, a choice authority in one class of Indian antiquities, counts Quaboag as one of the ten villages of Christian converts within the Nipmuck country. "Their character was more gentle and peaceful than generally belongs to savage life." If they were *praying* Indians, or if some of them had received the gospel, this was doubtless true ; but factions are always quarrelsome, and often unite only to prevail over a common enemy, as our fathers sorrowfully learned from these.

The settlement was not at first a favorite to emigrants. The grant failed to win settlers enough to meet the conditions of tenure.

Perhaps a grant soon after [1664] made in behalf of the Indians of Putikoo-kupog "nere Quoboag," a plantation not ex-

ceeding "fower thousand acres and that it prejudice not Ipswich grant" — delayed somewhat the settling here. Plainly some "prejudice" turned the restless emigrants of that day from here, for May 15, 1667, an extremely discouraging record is made of the place by the General Court.

"This Court, hauing perused the grant which the Generall Court made anno 1660 to the first vndertakers for that place doe finde that. 1. By their non observance of the condition of their grant, the same is altogether voyd, & that now the ordering & disposing thereof is wholly in this Courts power.

2. Considering that there is already at Quabange about sixe or seven families, & that the place may be capable of receiving many more, this Court will readily grant them the liberty of a towneship when they shall be in a fit capacity.

3. In the meane time this Court appoints Cap^t John Pinchon, John Aires, W^m Prichard, Richard Coy, & John Younglow, or any three of them, whereof Cap^t Pinchon to be one of the three, who shall haue power to admitt inhabitants, grant lands, & to order all the prudentiall affayres of the place in all respects, vntill it shall appeare that the place shall be so far settled wth able men as that this Court may judge meete to give them the full liberty of a towneship according to lawe.

4. Because the inhabitants of Ipswich made the first motion for that plantation, & some of them haue binn at charges about it, although by their remisse prosecution they haue now lost all their right, yet, such of them as shall settle there by midsummer come twelue moneth, they shall haue an interest in the lands there in proportion wth others; but if by that time they shall not be there settled, they shall then loose their lands, and all their charges wth they haue been at vpon y^e place.

5. They are to take care for the getting and maynteyning of a godly minister among them, and that no evill persons, enemies to the lawe of this comon weale in judgment or practise, be receaved as inhabitants.

6. For promoting of the aforesajd plantation, and encourage-

ment thereof, this Court doeth now grant that plantation seven yeares freedom from all publick rates and taxes to the country, provided those inhabitants of Ipswich w^{ch} intend to *inhabitants of Ipswich w^{ch} intend* to inhabit at Quabauge by mid-summer come twelve month doe engage to give security to the abovesajd comittee, w^{thin} three moneths after the date hereof, that they will performe accordingly, that so others that would settle there may not be hindred."

This legislative rebuke and free handling of the projectors of the settlement was not without effect. They doubtless bestirred themselves to meet the new condition, and the committee who were mostly on the "River" were no doubt much wiser managers of affairs than the Ipswich projectors. The growth was such that in 1673, the Court entrusted them with a town name and estate.

"In ans^r to the petition of the inhabitants of Quobauge, the Court judgeth it meete to grant their request, i. e. the liberty & priuiledge of a towneship, and that the name thereof be Brookfeild, provided they divide not the whole lands of the towneship till they be forty or fiuety families; in the mean time that their dividings one to another excede not two hundred acres to any present inhabitant."

I am at a loss to account for the language in the 3d section of the Act of 1677, appointing a committee "untill it shall appeare that the place shall be so farr settled wth able men as that the Court may judge meete to give them the full liberty of a towneship according to law,"—and then reappointing the committee in the act of erection, and again doing it nineteen years after, (1692) some of the same persons holding the office 41 years, or until 1718. Were there men fond of place and of profitable offices among even our fathers? The inhabitants did not begin to hold meetings, or to act with the committee, until the beginning of the next century (1700).

The River settlers must have entered into a partnership with the Ipswich planters, or else a most admirable amity and care for the common good prevailed, for by a deed dated 10th November 1665, Ensign Thomas Cooper of Springfield bought the land of measurement indefinite if not limitless, "together with the trees, waters, stones, profits, commodities and advantages thereof, for himself and for the present planters of Quaboag," of one Shattoockquis for 300 fathom of wampum. Who directed this purchase or why it was made is not apparent. Mr. Cooper in his deed of transfer given after the act incorporating the town was passed, declares that his "acting in the premises was only in the behalf of, and for the use and behoof of the inhabitants of Quaboag," etc. But the Court had already granted over and over the lands. Who paid the wampum,— the proprietors, or the settlers, or Mr. Cooper? Was this purchase merely to pacify the Indians, and justify the occupancy of the land to the exclusion of the local tribes? If it satisfied them, a mercantile justice was done by it, but that they did not understand it as an agreement to abandon these favorite haunts, is plain from their staying, just as they had done, on the soil.

This transfer (no price is named) was made to John Warner, Richard Coye and William Pritchard, — "to the inhabitants of Brookfield aforesaid, and to their successors and their heirs forever." This deed is recorded in Hampshire County, subscribed December 19, 1673, by Lieutenant Thomas Cooper. Two years after this act of General Court, a meeting house is found in possession of the "twenty families," and although no minister is discerned among them, yet the erection of the house of worship assures us that the word of God was then preached and his praises sung amid the wearisome solitude.

But their day of trial was at hand. It was truly a terrible day to meet. King Philip selected either the Indians dwelling

here as special confederates, or this lonely settlement for an early victim to his exterminating conspiracy. Perhaps the two united in his wary plot. Let us trace carefully this chapter of woe.

Philip, sachem of Mt. Hope, — the landmark of the region of the now beautiful town of Bristol, R. I., between the charming waters of Mount Hope and Narragansett Bays, — perpetuated his father Massasoit's temper toward the English, and especially toward their favorite theme — religion. He "rejected with disdain" the proposal to have the apostle Eliot preach. Mather says, "once, taking hold of the apostle's coat, he said, 'I care no more for the gospel than for that button'" Yet Gookin testifies that he had heard expressions from Philip showing that his conscience was moved. We hope it was so, indeed that may account in part for the intense fury of his movements. I strongly suspect some yet untold and secret enmity like a hidden brand, infuriated this subtle chieftain. So large and deadly a plan demanded impulses to frame and execute it unknown to the savage in his usual warfare. In eager hopefulness, I have considered the plea of reluctant consent, and of tender movings toward the English, — put in for him, — and that he was more the *executor* than the *projector* of the bloody work. May it finally be found to be so.

But an enthusiasm in enmity, that could blend and inflame all the "factions" and scattered families of savages who joined with Philip, had no doubtful or irresolute original projector.

The part that bloody Jesuit, Baron Castine, — with his troops of Indian wives and Popish priests, — had in it, was no doubt a Jesuit's part against Protestantism. Certain it is the Indians were trained in the use of firearms, and surprised the English by their supply of them and skill in using them, before it was known that, from that French nobleman's castle on the Penob-

scot river, these deadly missiles were freely furnished to the savages to be used against the English. But if we cannot unveil the terrible impulse moving this extirpating sachem, his terrible deeds written in the blood of our fathers and mothers, and echoing in shrieks and sighs to our day, commend the annalist to fidelity of record.

Suggestions of a wide-spread confederacy against the English had been dropped here and there, awaking the settlers to prudent concern, if not to watchfulness.

In the beginning of April, Waban, the principal ruler of the praying Indians living at Natic, came to one of the magistrates on purpose, and informed him that "he had ground to fear that Sachem Philip and other Indians, his confederates, intended some mischief shortly to the English, and Christian Indians." In May he repeated the warning. "Others of the Christian Indians did speake the same, and that when the woods were grown thick with green trees" the work would begin. These warnings proved true, for in mid July (14th) four or five men were suddenly attacked and killed in Mendon. This startled the Massachusetts settlements, and put the government into earnest action. "Blood was never shed in Massachusetts in a way of hostility before this day," says Mather. This deed is ascribed to Matoonus — "a grave and sober Indian appointed by Gookin a constable of Pakachoag" (part of Worcester and Ward, now Auburn.) His son four years before had been executed for the murder of an Englishman, and his "head set up on a pole" — a fearful sting to Indian vindictiveness, — and this slaughter is claimed to have been the father's revenge for that aggravated justice. The tidings got to Boston "next day at Lecture time, in the midst of the Sermon," and consternation spread with them.

A few days after, Philip narrowly escaped from Pocasset

swamp, and with a few chiefs reached the Nipmuck country, everywhere stirring the Indians to thirst for English blood. The government also, knowing the consequences of the Indians hereabouts uniting in such a strife, but not knowing that Philip had preceded them, sent Ephraim Curtis, whom Lincoln styles "the first settler of Worcester," — to observe and confirm all friendly disposition among them. On the 24th of July he had an interview with four of their sachems here, they promising to continue in peace. They would make a new treaty to that effect. To make sure of these good omens, the government very promptly sent Capt. Edward Hutchinson as an ambassador to secure the promised fidelity.

It was a wise selection on the ground of much friendly acquaintance with these capricious and treacherous neighbors. Capt. Thomas Wheeler commanding "twenty men or more," as escorts, with three christian Indians, to help as guides and interpreters, attended him. They set out from Cambridge, 28th July. "Passing," says one "the forsaken wigwams of the Savages who had fled before to concentrate power for a heavy blow at Brookfield," which they "reached Lord's day Aug. 1st. about noon," and not remembering to hallow the day according to the commandment, sent at once four men to inform the Indians of their errand; not any harm to them, but a message from the Honored Governor and Council, desiring the promised league for peace.

The Indians met these men with great uproar, and "an hundred and fifty fighting men" gathered about them. "The young men amongst them were *stout* in their speeches, and surly in their carriage."

After brief parley, "some of the chief Sachems" promised to meet the messengers the next morning "about 8 of the clock upon a plain within three miles of Brookfield." Some of these

Indians knew Capt. Hutchinson personally, having worked on his farm. They "would speak with none but Capt. H. himself."

The suspicious appearances "did much discourage divers of the company," says Wheeler, but Hutchinson feeling, no doubt, the great urgency of the case and his personal stake in the success of his mission, and being also persuaded by the over confidence of the Brookfield men, resolved to go out to meet them. Early on that sorrowful morning,—Monday, Aug. 2d., as we picture the scene, anxious countenances and few words, and silent preparations marked the hour. Hutchinson, thoughtful, inquisitive, foreboding, is in consultation much of the time. The little band of two captains and twenty soldiers, with guns and pistols, and uniform, the three Indian guides, — a great sight in the lonely Settlement, — and "three of the principal inhabitants of that town marched."

It must have been a morning of bodeful gloom, especially to the women and children, and to the troops also, as watchfully they descended yon hill-sides, and filed into the thick wood, hiding their path from those left behind. They came to the spot agreed on. Not an Indian was there. Former suspicions strengthen. They gather in a circle, and in low undertone inquire of each other, what shall be done? (Indian sentries no doubt all the time were watching them.) The former arguments are gone over,—a false issue was put upon this lack of Indian faith, and the three Brookfield men strongly urged their good will, especially pleading that David, a great friend to the English, was one of the chief sachems.

It was a solemn halt. The order to march, tremulous and half stifled by the dense thicket is given, and in bodeful silence they advance "towards a swamp where the Indians then were." It is such a thicket that they can march only in a single file.

"About sixty or seventy rods" are thus threaded, when a sharp whoop pierces the silence — a score of muskets flash and roar, — arrows whizz, and the thicket is instantly alive with murderous savages. Yells and war-cries terrify man and horse. Tomahawks gleam, — guns blaze, painted warriors spring like tigers from lurking places, and the terrors of an Indian onset fill the gloomy defile, — and, alas the result! Eight white men reel and groan in mortal agony. The three Brookfield men are among the fallen. They are Sergeant John Ayres, Sergeant Joseph Pritchard, and Corporal John Coye; also Phillips of Boston, Farley of Billerica, Coleborn of Chelmsford, Smedly of Concord, and Hapgood of Sudbury. Five others were wounded, among them both the captains, Hutchinson and Wheeler, and his son Thomas. Flight was their only hope. One of the christian Indians warned Wheeler, now chief in command, not to go back the way they came, as it was Indian strategy to throng the path of retreat, with their surest marksman, when 'twas the same as that of approach. This counsel, and the adroit guidance by the same Indian, through a long circuit from the valley, probably saved the remainder. The only prisoner captured by the Indians, was one of the three guides, a christian Indian named George. Capt. Wheeler badly wounded, was rescued by his intrepid son, who with a fractured arm, helped his father from his wounded horse to mount his own; and then catching another, whose rider had been killed, achieved thus their escape.

The scene of this bloody ambush cannot be fixed with certainty. A recent inspection with Wheeler's narrative in hand however, quite assures me that tradition rightly points to the defile from the head of Wickaboag pond, crossing the present town line into New Braintree. Nature seldom builds a better trap for the use of the Indian warrior than is found there. The

local features visible now, tamed as they are by clearing and tillage, meet the conditions of the narrative very fully. The deep winding valley, multiplying by its crooks the shelters for an ambuscade; its round isolated hills, — as good as so many breastworks to these forest marksmen, — the adjacent summits rising tier above tier, so that those posted on them could shoot over the heads of those below, upon the victims in the valley; and all overlooking the movements of the troops on the banks of the brook, and over all these spread the net-work of woods, underbush, crags and broken ledge; and that gorge equals in available facilities for an Indian ambuscade any spot ever examined. As it now lies, softened by the culture of nearly two centuries, and relieved of what must have been its bodeful gloom and hideous grandeur, it is a rare scene for art, offering uncommon combinations of quiet force and rude gracefulness, with aspects well sustaining the tragic gloom which the history so painfully requires.

I cannot but trust that many a homestead here, and of emigrant sons and daughters, will be adorned with careful pictures of it, before another centennial day shall recall the bloody story which must forever thrill the descendants of the victims who perished there.

The smitten bleeding troops, pale and spent, at last reach the houses on the hill-top probably in mid-afternoon. The anxious families soon learn the terrible tidings. But panic did not become helpless despair. Into one of those scanty dwellings, soldiers, women and children fly, screaming in their terror. Mothers snatch their babes from the cradles and little ones cling to older ones, and leaving their little all, precious because so little, flee to the selected house. A few timbers and boards are hastily set about the walls outside, and feather beds are hung up on the inside. Lieut. Curtis and Henry Young are posted

off for help. The savages meet them. They turn in retreat. The victors incensed by the mutual discovery chase them back, and in noisy fury beset the little fortress. It must have been an awful hour to the beleagnered inmates, cut off from all hope of succor and ignorant of the numbers of the blood-thirsty throng outside. All hope must at first have died within them. But God was their helper. After the first storm of shot, there was a check. Only Henry Young, looking from the garret window, was struck by a bullet. He died two days after. The same afternoon a son of "Sergeant Prichard," (who was left among the slain of the morning,) was intercepted, returning to his father's house "to fetch more goods out of it" and cruelly slain. As the sun went down, house after house is seen in flames. The Indians pillage and then burn them. What a night was that! The poor wounded men, weak from loss of blood and their fearful retreat, are stretched on the floor. Women, pale and haggard, crouch where they can, to avoid the shot which came "amongst us like hail." Children, hungry and frightened, cling to mothers as helpless as themselves. Seventy-five persons are crowded into not more than four small rooms, and "very meanly provided of clothing, or furnished with provisions." Think of that sun-setting! of the tears and moans in that rude house! Thirty miles from any other dwelling of white men, and not a foot can cross the door-sill but to meet a bullet or the tomahawk!

Were the wives and children of Ayres, Pritchard and Coye there? Hear them beg of the soldiers for a word about their slaughtered husbands and fathers! Did they see them fall? hear any last words from them? Did the Indians use the scalping-knife; and what would they do with the dead bodies? Oh, could they look once more on those loved faces, and smooth the turf over their mangled forms! Has Mrs. Pritchard

looked through the little window, and seen that head set upon a pole just by the door of *her* house, — widow she now is. Does she know it is the head of *her* son slain just now, which his murderers after “kicking it about like a foot-ball, set it up before the door of his father’s house in our sight.”

Our fathers and mothers were then purchasing *for us* these lands and homes! Do we keep in mind the price paid?

All night says Wheeler “they did roar against us like so many wild bulls,” till the rising of the moon near morning, they got hay and like combustible matter, and set it on fire, near a corner of the house. It was daring work to go out and quench it. Two men were hit while doing it. The gallant Curtis again attempts to elude the sentries and get to Marlboro’ for help. The ammunition was lessening, and the Indians growing furious at the resistance they meet. He goes a little way, but finding the foe so numerous is obliged to return. How their hearts sink as he calls for admission at the barred door. Hope seems to die in them. But toward morning, touched perhaps by some woman’s or little child’s persuasion, he tries a third time, and on hands and knees “was fain to creep for some space of ground,” and so passed the tired and less wakeful Indians, and “though very much spent and ready to faint by reason of want of sleep before he went from us, and his sore travel night and day in that hot season” — he got safely to Marlboro’ and from thence to Boston. But their God had counsels for deliverance little thought of by them. Unlooked for helpers were on the way for their relief. Some emigrants on their way to Connecticut coming near the town on Monday, heard the firing, and discerning signs of trouble, durst go no farther, but hastened back to Marlboro’ where most providentially a troop had just arrived, which could go to Brookfield.

But travel was slow. Tuesday, Aug. 3d. the shooting and

shouting was kept up, and being baffled by the dauntless resistance of the English, the savages "resort to taunts, mocking the prayers of the people. Some went to the town's meeting house," twenty rods distant, and dared the people of the garrison to come out and pray and sing psalms, themselves making hideous screeching, "somewhat resembling singing."

The English muskets did sore work that day on the besiegers, and toward evening their dead and wounded were carried off on the backs of survivors, in sight of the garrison. They again tried to fire the house by using rags dipped in brimstone tied to their arrows. The roof once caught fire from these, and only by cutting through, could the besieged put out the flames. This day too, they pushed a pile of burning flax and hay up to the house, and so guarded the door that no way was found by which to extinguish it, but by breaking down a part of the wall next to the fire. A ball of fire was also shot into the garret among some flax there; but the "keeper of Israel" being pleased to prosper their endeavors, these dangerous devices all failed.

Not a man was hurt that day, except Thomas Wilson, who while drawing water was fired at by an Indian who guessed his position behind a board fence. The ball struck him "in the upper jaw and in the neck." "The man affrighted" says Fiske, "bawled out that he was killed." The Indian knowing his voice, (Wilson was a settler) shouted "me kill major Wilson," "but his wound was healed in a short time."

Wednesday, 4th of August, the *third* terrible day dawns. The savages galled by the shot from the garrison, began a counter-work, using "posts, rails, boards and hay" to fortify the meeting-house and the barn belonging to the garrison house. They needed shelter. The firing and yelling diminishes. Powder grows scarce, and the English grow fearless. The assailants again turn to the oft-tried project of burning them out.

A cart was filled with hay and flax, and planks set up in the end to shelter those wheeling it up to the house. The marksmen in the house, made this of little avail. They next hit upon a very promising device. Barrels were taken, poles run through the heads as axles, and to these, two strings of poles "about fourteen rods long" were attached, truckle wheels being fastened under at intervals, to hold and bear the poles. The end was loaded with hay, flax and chips. Two of these cumbrous machines were fixed, and made ready for use that night. But the Lord, who is "a present help in time of trouble," sent first a shower which wet the firing stuff and doubtless *dampened* the spirits of the savages also. The sun went down on them busy over these contrivances; when "about an hour in the night," or after sunset, the shouts of white men and the bellowing of cattle startle both the Indians and the garrison. Major Willard, found at Marlboro with Capt. Parker of Groton, and fifty-three men, five of them friendly Indians — by a forced march had in a most timely hour reached them. But neither party knew the other. Willard thought the Indians were in the house, and was about firing upon it, when Major Wilson's voice revealed who the inmates were. The trumpet was sounded, the doors opened, but not too soon, for the Indians discovering the arrival, attacked them furiously, wounding two men and killing a horse before they could be sheltered. Oh, the joy in that dark, overerowed dwelling that evening!

All night the despairing rage of the assailants was felt. Five more horses were wounded in the yard before morning. The house reserved by the Indians as a kind of outpost was set on fire, that the light from its flames might guide their assaults, and toward morning, the meeting house and the fortified barn sent their lurid flames into the sultry August sky. Then discouraged, and apprehensive no doubt, that their cruel per-

fidly would be avenged, the foe, as the day broke, slunk away into their hiding places and were seen no more. That Willard was not cut off in his approach was eminently providential. He had no information of the treachery or of the fight. All he knew, was from the report of the returning emigrants, and all they could tell, was conjecture. Two sentry posts lurked unseen by him on his way ; one probably near the East Brookfield railway station, where the remains of an Indian fort were recently visible, and the other perhaps not far from the old three corners where the town-pound used to be. The Indians afterwards said, those at the first picket let the troops pass, so that while those at the next post attacked them in front, they would fall upon the rear ; but Wheeler supposes that the main force at the guard posts had been called in to help get the fire-carts in readiness, and all were so busy and noisy over them, as not to notice the alarm guns, and so the deliverers came safely to their almost hopeless brethren.

Thursday, August 5th, all was still. No trace of the foe was seen, save in the smouldering remnants of the buildings and half-burnt contrivances left behind. The woods were scoured but no Indian was found. Two days after, a man was wounded by the skulking, wary foe ; and so ended the bloodshed of that world-famed scene. Toward the end of the week troops arrived from Boston, and on the same day Lieut. Cooper reached them from Springfield.

What a story for epic or for drama ! Such heroism, endurance, suffering ! What a theme for pathos or for passion ! “ The waste and howling wilderness ” on every side ; the smoke of burning homes lingering in the brands of the huge timbers then used ; trees and gardens broken down ; fields pillaged ; cattle slaughtered, and, over all, the remembrance of the dead, slain

by brutal foes who found a joy in the torture, and a delight in the agony of their victims.

Five days they linger ; and on Tuesday, Aug. 10th, a melancholy train set off from the only remaining house of the settlement. Capt. Hutchinson and such of the wounded as could bear the travel, and probably many of the fifty women and children are in it. Marlboro' is the haven of their hopes. Three wearisome days, unsheltered by night, scantily fed by day, are spent in getting there. It was but ten miles a day. The brave Hutchinson was so "overtired with his long journey, and spent by his wounds," that five days later, "on the 19th of August" he sunk into the sleep from which the war-whoop would no more awake him. Next day he was buried, and his dust still sleeps in that ancient sister town. Brookfield owes to his memory some grateful tablet, recording his rare worth and sorrowful end.

Major Willard reached his family safely, but died two years after, and for nearly a century has borne dishonor from the unaccountable story given first, and given only, by Dr. Fiske of this town, of his being rebuked by the court and dying of a broken heart from it, on account of his most humane and gallant rescue of our fathers. A descendant of the noble soldier, has recently very ably exposed the falsity of the report and forever extinguished the sad slander it conveyed.

The dispersion however was not complete. Thomas Wheeler, son of the Captain and some other wounded men, and of course a garrison to protect, and friends to nurse them remained, and Wheeler relates that the "men women and children removed with what they had left, to several places either where they had lived before their planting or setting down there, or where they had relatives to receive or entertain them." Dr. Fiske says "the Court ordered the people away." So far from that, the court sent men and munitions to the garrison. "Major Willard

stayed at Brookfield some weeks after our coming away from there, several companies of soldiers were sent up thither and to Hadley " says Wheeler, and Feb. 21, 1676 :

" A warrant was ordered to be issued out to y^e comittee for y^e army to send away y^e prouissions ordered to be at the head quarters at Marlborow by y^e last day of y^e weeke ; also, to send vp some liquors & spice, wth a competency of canvas for a tent to shelter the prouisions & ammunition, as also the carpenters tooles, nayles, &c, to build a quarter at Suoboag, or elsewhere, w^{ch} was don."

In March 1676, J. Brading informs the Council of the "jeopardous condition of Quobaug garrison," and on the 22d of March 1676, "Capt. Nath'l Graves of Charlestown was appointed Commander of the garrison at Brookfield," with liberty, "to have 20 men, and 30 horses."

Probably the settlement was mainly scattered, but the evidence is full that it was not broken up. The death of Philip the following August (1676) broke the spirit and strength of the Indian plot against the settlers, and although frequent murders by them made frontier life insecure, yet the settlers held fast their homes, and others adventured in time to join them.

" May 22d, 1691. In answer to the Peticon of the Inhabitants of Squabang alias Brookfield, Colonel *John Pyachron*, Mr. *Joseph Hawley*, Samuel Marshfield, John Hitchcock and Sam'l Ely, formerly appointed a Committee for regulating the settlement of the plantation of Squabang alias Brookfield are continued and impowered to that Service, taking effectual care so to direct and order the said Settlement with that compactness and neer Scituation of the dwellings, that they may all be drawn into a Line of a Garrison, and made capable of defence against the Indian and French Enemy."

"May 23d. Mr. Joseph Hawley of Northampton is appointed and impowered to Joine persons in marriage in said Town."

These notices by the court show plainly the non-extinction of the settlement.

An act of the court adds a little light as to their condition, thus:—"to Susanna Ayres late of Quaboag, widdow, alijas Brookfeild, humbly desiring that what she expended on, and the souldjers had of her for y^e countrys vse, as five pounds tenn shillings in swyne, by Capt. Pooles order, as also seventeen shillings and seven pence Ephraim Curtis had for himself & company & horses on the countrys account wth what Major Willard had, which will appear by the account she may be pajd & satisfied for."

She may have been the widow of Serjeant Eyres, (John Ayres) slain in Monday mornings fight at the swamp.

But the recovery from the partial dispersion was slow and cautious. Whatever written history the settlement had accumulated in those fifteen years, and no doubt records had been made, perished in that fiery ruin.

A stray, torn leaf numbered (5,) as if the fifth of some book, gives us the *first line* of the written story of the Town. For its own sake and as a specimen of scores of pages of early records, it is copied:

"Feby. 24: 1687. Lay'd out To Mr. Wolcott twenty acres of meadow and stripes of upland and swamp, four acres Lyeth on the South side of the Rhode, part Ag'st Joseph Wilcot's upland and part adgacint to eight acres which Lyeth more easterly onely the parteth it."

"Also eight acres of meadow Lying on the 7 mile river and between the seven and five mile river, being part meadow; part swamp, being the whole piece In that neck on the East Side of the five mile River and to the upland of the 7 mile river."

May 25, 1687, a measurement of Mr. Wolcott's land is specified, and a grant of ten acres on the "pine plain" was made March 3d before. Joseph Hawley was the Register. This record, however, was not the original, but "Taken out of Mr. Samuel Markfield's measuring Book, Mar. 2, 1710, by the Comitees' order."

It is a little surprising that during the seven years following the burning of the town, so little trace can be found of it, either in the town, or in the court records of the colony. Faint and few, no doubt, were the settlers that lingered among the desolations and dangers of the place. But in Oct. 25, 1692, a plaintive and tedious petition was made, "To y^e Rt. Honble his Excellency S^r W^m Phipps, Gov^r of y^r Majestys Province of y^e Mass Bay in N. E.," setting forth that "haveing made some essay to y^e Resetling s^d place (Brookfield in y^e Co. of Hampshire) and finding difficulties" (drawn out at length, mainly that of non-residence of land owners, or as the petitioners state) — "of y^e most suteable Land to encourage Inhabitants," they pray that all former grants may be null and void unless the holders "come and bee helpfull in bearing of charges," etc. They also speak "as haveing some encouragement we shall speedily have a minester of God's Word amongst us." Several new names appear on this petition, as Owen, Lawrence, Tomblin and Marsh. As a response to this the "Great and Genrall Co^t ordered that John Pynchon, Esqr., Cap^t Sam^l Partridg, Mr. Joseph Hawley, Mr. Hitchcock and Mr. Medad Pumry be and are hereby appointed and Impoured to that service" (i. e. as a committee) "to direct and regulate y^e settlement of s^d plantation and the affairs thereat."

It was during the summer of this year that the Woolcot tragedy, so famed in our annals, occurred. Dr. Fiske says,

two or three families were broken up. Doubtless the Indians were such a terror to the settlers as much to impede the growth of the settlement.

Nov. 24th, 1698: "The following Resolve sent up from the Representatives, was read, and Concurred with, vizt:

"In Answer to the Petition of the Inhabitants of Brookfield, Resolved, That there be Twenty Pounds paid out of the Public Treasury of this Province, towards the support of an Orthodox Minister for one Year, to commence from the time of the Settlement of Such a Minister amongst them.

I consent,

WM. STOUGHTON."

Two years more are without record though this committee doubtless nursed the infant town with faithful care, and we cross into the next century before we meet a further trace. Nov. 15, 1701, on a tattered leaf marked [8,] is written, "Laid out to Goodman Perry a parcel of land." There is an earlier date by three days on a leaf numbered [24] in the same handwriting, and so through all these Sibylline scraps, disorder is the constant feature. From under the one quoted is an entry of 1710. But all these tokens indicate an original *book*, (it should be re-made,) detailing the endless labors of the committee who served the curious caprice of settlers as to "upland" "meadow" and "plain." For twenty-five years the town records are little else than these intricate locations, exchanges and adjustments of land. Other records were doubtless made, but they have perished in their stormy passage toward us.

Returning to the colonial records:

"June 27, 1702. "Whereas the Plantation of Brookfield lying on the great Road betwixt this her Majesty's Province &

the Colony of Ct. being a usual & necessary Stage for Travelers & post passing betwixt the two Grants is anew beginning to be settled & yet unable to support itself without receiving some assistance from the Government, being a Garrisoned place, *Resolved* £20, towards the support of a Chaplain to that Garrison for the present year be payed out of the public Treasury."

Next year, Nov. 26, 1703. "Considering the extraordinary Impoverishing circumstances the Town of Brookfeild's under by reason of the present War," the same sum was voted, for "support of the ministry." The same was again voted in 1705, "provided such minister be approved by the ministry of the Neighboring Towns." In 1706, Nov. 7, £20, and— "beginning yesterday Nov. 15, 1707, £20 are allowed towards maintaining a minister in said town, provided such minister be approved by the ministry of the three neighboring towns."

Until the year 1715, the same generous gifts were repeated, so that (the worthy General Court serving as a Home Missionary Society to the feeble settlement,) the ministry of the gospel was probably never remitted for much time. The fruit of that pious care is seen in the moral and religious excellence of the inhabitants to the present day.

"Nov. 8, 1710. 10 Pounds granted towards mending the Mill Dam in the said Town, and such of the Inhabitants as are by the Enemy driven from their Houses & Livings be admitted into the Service as Soldiers that are capable thereof & his Excellency shall please to entertain :—

Consented to, J. Dudley."

"Saturday, June 14, 1712," £20 were granted "towards the maintenance of Mr. John James in the work of the Ministry at Brookfield the year curr^t. Consented to, J. Dudley."

Tuesday, June 16, 1713. The £20 were granted "for the year current towards the maintenance of the ministry in the Plantation of Brookfield."

June 22, 1714. "In answer to a petition of Thomas Ayres &c. Sons of John Ayres some Time of Quaboag alias Brookfield, diverse years since deceased, Praying that the present Committee or some other may be ordered to make Inquiry & Cause a Register to be made of the several Lay Rights & Proprieties of Land within the said Plantation granted to the first & ancient Settlers & others to be entered in a Book for that Purpose:—Ordered that the Prayer of the Petitioners be Granted & that Samuel Partridge Esq^r, & others the present Committee for Brookfield be directed & empowered to make Inquiry & Cause a Register to be made of the Lay Rights & Proprieties of Land within the s^d Plantation granted to the first & ancient Settlers & others, particularly of a Grant made to Mr. Phillips some Time Minister of the said place, & make Report to this Court; And the Committee to take Care that Provision be made for the payment of Mr. John James late minister of Brookfield during his continuance there.'

"Concurred by the Representatives:—Consented to, J. Dudley."

After tedious details in the committee's book of metes and bounds, seeming enough to determine every acre of this soil, the grateful record is reached of a meeting held Sept. 17, 1714, when the Committee, "unanimously agree That the Inhabitants Build a Meeting House wherein to attend the worship of God, which shall be sett up & erected In s^d place where formerly the Meeting House was Built: near old John Ayres House Lott, Lying near about the center of The town." An "Exact List of the Rateable Estate," was also ordered at this meeting and a special rate "for the payment of there minister." This

however, was three years before a minister was settled. Each man was required also to give a day's work to repair the Mill, or pay 3 shillings; their care for the bread of life, and for that which perisheth thus thoughtfully uniting.

A year and three months after this, was an eventful day to Brookfield township. "A meeting of the Committee was held and of *the Inhabitants also*." "The Committee then ordered a Highway of six rods wide be laid out from the place where the meeting-house is to be built, down to the new County Road on the side of Coys Brook." That vote opened the grand avenue climbing yon noble hill; a feature of scenery noticed by even foreign visitors.

The inhabitants on this day, "chose William Old, Edward Walker, Jr., and Elisha Rise for a committee to order and to take care to carry on y^e building a bridge over Quaboag Rivers att Mason's point." Another committee were to take a like charge of a bridge "att Marks River." But the great act of the day, was the following written with a special date and heading:

"The day above s^d, The Inhabitants of Brookfeild agreed with the consent of y^e Committe to build a meeting House wherein to carry on y^e worship of God. In form and manner as follows: viz, 45 foott in Lenght & 35 foott in wedlit: and to put in Galery peices so y^t they may build Galeries when they shall have occation, & to cary on the building of s^d house as far as They can conveniently with y^e Labour, & what shall be Required in money for y^e carying of s^d work to be Raised by a Town Rate: & if any person or persons Refuse to Labour, Having suitable warning by y^e committee Hereafter mentioned, shall pay there proportion in money. The Inhabitants Likewise agree to gett y^e Timber this winter." A committee of nine;

Thomas Barnes chairman, was named "For the carying of s^d work."

In another place is the record on that day, "that the great feild upon y^e plain shall be sufficiently fenced and att no time laid open." This was to preserve the corn planted there; and "a pair of bars or gate at each end were to be kept shut," on penalty. This fine common thus was, a century and a half ago, the *town corn-field*! Imagine the beauty of it.

A tax of £30 was voted Jan. 4, 1717, "for Glass & nails for there Meeting House & Eight pounds for window cases & other public uses."

The next glimpse of this meeting house is in votes, "att a Legall Town meeting on Thursday Dec. 14 1721." They outline so clearly the house, the people and the times, that I must recite them.

"Voted; To build up the seats in the body of y^e meeting house with good strong plain seats." Pew lots were then voted to various persons, and, "Voted: to build a ministry pue on y^e Right hand of y^e pulpit; to y^e stairs of y^e pulpit to y^e middle stud In the window." Dea. Henry Gilbert: "a pue next to y^e ministry pue," and Dea. Joseph Jennings next to him. Each grantor should pay 40 shillings to the town Treasurer, "to be laid out to finish the house." Seven years had passed since the building began, and it was yet unfinished. On the same day a vote directed the Town's Clerk to gather up, "all the copyes of Records belonging to y^e Town."

But to return to the great topic of the records of that period — the call and settlement of Mr. Cheney.

"At a meeting of the Inhabitants of Brookfield on Apr., y^e 5th 1716. Voted, y^t Thomas Barnes be moderator for s^d Day :

Voted that Edward Walker, Sen., Joseph Banister and Elisha Rise, Doe further Discourse Mr. Cheney as to his proposals for order to a settlement in s^d place to carry on y^e work of the ministry."

Having considered Mr. Cheney's proposals, the inhabitants voted, "To Give Mr. Cheney for his salery, fifty-two pounds, yearly for three years; and to Rise forty shillings a year until it comes to seventy pounds, And then to stay."

Voted: "To Build him a house & Barn according to y^e Dementions y^e he has given; Mr. Cheney providing Glass, nails & Iron."

Voted: "to Break up & fence & fitt to sow Eight acres of Land: four this year: & four acres To be Broke up on the plain this year. The other two acres to be done within four years."

Voted: "To gett Mr. Cheney twenty five cords of wood yearly his Life time."

Voted: "To give Mr. Cheney, each man one days work yearly; for six years. His House & Barn to be built in four years. Always provided Mr. Cheney be our ordained minister."

"Agreed and allowed by the committee for Brookfield, May 16, 1716."

This committee appear to have had a species of ratifying prerogative, as all proceedings at this period have the certificate of their acceptance. Next comes the first recorded communication from Mr. Cheney.

"Gentlemen as to y^e Dimentions of y^e House & Barn you Propose to Build for me, In case I should Settle amongst you, it is my mind & desire with Respect to my house: y^e y^e Lenght may be 42 foott. The wedht 20 foott; as to y^e stud, fourteen foott stud & as to y^e barn That it may be 30 foott long, & 20 foott wide wth a Lentow on one side."

This from your servant, Thos. Cheney."

As to y^e Glass, nails & Iron I will provide & Procure myself so far as Is necessary to s^d House & Barn. Thos. Cheney."

"The above s^d Proposals were voted on at the meeting Apr., 5th, in the affirmative."

A little later the town confirmed a grant made in 1714, of three lots of meadow and plain, and then add a gift of 100 acres more, "to be taken up when he shall chuse." The same generous spirit re-appears in Mar. 8th 171⁶/₇, "taking into Consideration a former grant In the antient manuscripts of Brookfeild of Some Land sequestered for the ministry," they confirm the same. This was about thirty acres.

"In the *antient manuscripts* of Brookfeild," — the great longing of men in all times for a *past* on which to fasten remembrances, and by which to soothe and mellow in its shadows the tiresome glare of the present.

Scarce half a century has passed since the first settler's cabin sent its smoke through the thick trees, and part of that time dispersion and desolation had been their history. Yet true to a great instinct of civilization, they fondly recall "antient" records and dignify public acts by revered precedent. 'Tis an evidence of that reverent sympathy with the *past*, which virtuous action always feels, and which this day's celebration confirms and displays.

Through another vote — Oct. 12, 1716 — the affection of the people to the young pastor is shown, and a tradition of earliest ministerial services confirmed. "Whereas about 3 years since the Gen^l Cot^e allowed to the ministry in Brookfield twenty pounds, of which sum Mr. Elmore who left the ministry so as he had but one half part of s^d sum pay^d to him, there Remaynes ten pounds of s^d sum or donation, the Committee judge it

meete this last part be pay^d to Mr. Thomas Cheney the present minister as part of his sallery, and have given order to Luke Hitchcock Esqr., to get the money for him."

By another act at this meeting, a public building of some consequence to this history is shown. "Sold to Mr. Thos. Cheney our present minister, y^e *Towne's* House & about six acres of land it stands on, for which he is to sett of, & allow unto the Inhabitants thirty pounds of the first Rates that are due to him, or will be due."

What building was this? Only the "besieged house," was left standing by the Indians. Was this a garrison built in part by the government, and used at this time for public worship? This is the only trace of it.

The first Tax list appears in April of the next year. One hundred and two names and estates are set down in it. The highest tax was £3. 17s. 8d. assessed upon Jona. Hamilton and the sum of all the taxes was £121. 3s.

We are surprised at the number of names now found in the town, but some were plainly those of non-residents, owners but not tillers of the soil, and seven of the taxes are on "the heirs," of settlers who so early slept beneath the clods of the valley. The effects of non-resident ownership had become grievous, and in July 26, 1715, "the following order passed by Representatives Read and Concurred."

"Upon Reading a Petition of Thomas Baker, Philip Goss, and Joseph Banister, in Behalf of the Inhabitants of Brookfield, Showing that by Reason of the Desertion of the Place by the first Grantors, & by the Sale of many Grants since made, Good Part of the Lands have fallen into the hands of Strangers, who neither improve, nor sell to those who would settle Themselves

amongst them, which greatly obstructs their Growth & hurts their public Affairs, Especially rendering them incapable of Settling & Supporting the ministry amongst them, Praying that for some few years next Succeeding, and until they shall be more capable of Enduring a charge, All Lands, belonging to non-Residents as well as others, tho' not under Improvement, may be made liable to be taxed in all Town Assessments and that the committee may receive direction therein :

Ordered that for seven Years next coming all Town Assessments in Brookfield be raised on Polls, as the law directs, and on the Real Estates of the Non-Residents as well as the Resident Proprietors, Exclusive of Personal Estates, w^h the Committee for Settling the said Town are hereby directed & fully empowered to levy & collect accordingly so long as they shall be continued by this court, and to take care that the Town be settled in the most regular compact and defensible manner that may be.

Consented to.

J. Dudley.

The evidently strong wish to have a minister settled among them met so many hindrances that not until July 16, 1717, were they able to fix a day for the act. As that vote, in a sense, begins the ecclesiastical history of the town, it claims a place.

Voted: "That the Reverend Mr. Cheney shall be ordained minister for the Town. The Third Wedn., in October next is appointed & sett apart For Mr. Cheney's ordination."

Voted: "That Mr. Tilly Merick & Joseph Banister aQuant Mr. Cheney with the Town's mind & as to the day agreed upon for his ordination."

"And now made Return y^t Mr. Cheney consents thereto."

Voted: "That Tilly Merick (& others) Doe take care that suitable Provision be made for such Elders & Messengers as may be called to assist in our ordination." "Voted: That y^e celebrate & sett apart a Day of fasting & Prayer to Implore God's

Presents w^h us in this solemn & weighty matter, which Day is left to Mr. Cheney to appoint. Full & clear votes.

Test, Thomas Gilbird, Moderator."

Underwritten is the evidently gratified mind of the Committee who "Doe well approve of the vote afores^d And Rejoyce in their unanimity in so good a work, & hope to have further oca-tion to Rejoyce in their good settlement." No record is found of the ordination, but the printed sermon preached by Rev. Solomon Stoddard of Northampton determines it, and the formation of the church. "The duty of GOSPEL MINISTERS to preserve a PEOPLE from CORRUPTION set forth in a sermon preached at Brookfield Oct., 16, 1717, being the day wherein the Church was gathered and MR. THOMAS CHENEY was ordained Pastor."

This was the second church gathered between Marlboro and the Connecticut River. The tokens of an unusual esteem toward this first pastor, recur in the acts both of committee and inhabitants. Through the dim records of the time, we seem to discern a genial, ardent pastor, living in great intimacy with his flock. He escaped contention in worldly matters, even to his own loss. In 1721, he communicates to the town :

"In answer to a motion from them to have me procure my own wood, I being Informed Its your desire I would do it, & aquit the Town of their obligation in that particular. This is to Inform you that I am willing it four or five yrs. for five pounds a year, & not be obliged to take it Longer or to take it during my Life, for eight pounds a year. Rather Inclining to the former, which is all at present, from yours,

Thomas Cheney, Brookfield April th 18^h."

In October of this year, a note from him acknowledges himself "satisfied and contented with what Liet. Thomas Gilbert

bath done in that way " — i. e. building him a house and barn, and discharges the town from further obligation.

The people agreed to dig and stone a well for him, if he would release them from the one days work each man for six years. There is no sign of the least disagreement in the record, nor does tradition bring us any, until the coming of Rev. Geo. Whitefield to the town. Thursday, Oct. 16, 1740, the great Evangelist on his way from Leicester to Northampton reached the parsonage. The land was astir under the mighty power of God upon his preaching. An almost electric force seemed to have been given to divine truth through his eloquence. To see and hear him was the universal wish. Mr. Cheney's people shared this enthusiasm, and when the great preacher came to the town, they flocked to the meeting house. The pastor hesitated ; it was an influence he was unacquainted with, and rather feared than favored. But the flock were before the shepherd, and with characteristic discretion he yielded to their demand ; not, however, before the throng made the meeting house too small by far, and around a great rock, said to be Northwest of Mr. Baxter Barnes' house they gathered. The wonderful preacher began,—kindly saluting them. He was glad to see them ; and then passed to enquire for the motives drawing them there. "Some of you come to hear what the babbler will say," is a sentence remembered by a hearer who went to her rest during the ministry of Rev. Dr. Phelps.

A great reviving of religion ensued, in which Mr. Cheney heartily labored and by which the religious character of the town was memorably strengthened.*

*His grave is at Brookfield, a few rods from the entrance on the right hand. The epitaph reads, "Here lyes buried the Body of the Rev. Thomas Cheney, the faithful Pastor of the Church in this Place for more than 30 years. Died Decr. 11th, 1747. Aged 57."

A few traces of civil history recal us again to itself. A new life, from some source, was visibly infused into town affairs at the beginning of the year 1713. The Committee chosen by the General Court petitioned for new members, "being much weakened by the death of Joseph Hawley, Esqr." Mr. Ebenezer Pomroy and Mr. Luke Hitchcock were elected.

At the next meeting new vigor is apparent. A "list of conditions to land grants" was determined; as, that the holder should "work upon y^e land granted within six moneths from y^e grant. 2. He should come and live on it within a year. 3. Should live on it three years from the grant and failing in any of these particulars the grant reverted to the town." These decisive terms quickened and consolidated the settlement, and infused both vigor and confidence into improvements essential to their prosperity. Capt. Pomroy was appointed Surveyor,—“1 pence pr. acra for Laying out, to be paid by the owner.” Philip Goss shortly had liberty to build a horse-bridge over the corner of Wickaboag pond, his neighbors helping in the work, and being relieved of their taxes for so doing. In July, John Wilcutt has a grant of forty acres of upland "free," having been at great expense in building a grist-mill, and begun a saw-mill "which will be very Benefitiall to the Town." Prosperity plainly was smiling on the town, and at the end of five years, and in less than one year after the settlement of a minister, such was the progress that the Committee petitioned "His Excellency, Samuel Shute, Esqr., Captain Gen'l and Governor in Chief over His Majesty's Province of Mass. Bay in N. E. and the General Court," that the people of Brookfield, now near fifty families on the place, have near finished a very convenient Meeting House, have settled a church and ordained an orthodox and

learned minister; "be made a Township, and said Com. released."

An act granting this petition was passed Nov. 12, 1718, and Brookfield invested with all the powers, privileges and authorities to direct, order and manage all the affairs as other towns. The town was assigned to Hampshire for its county connection. It remained a part of Hampshire until the erection of Worcester County, Apr. 2, 1731, when it was transferred to this, its present connection.

By comparing the population at the dates 1698, when only twelve families dwelt here, and in 1718, twenty years after, when fifty families were numbered, an average yearly growth of less than two families is shown.

"The Town being Dismist from y^e Committee, held its first Town Meeting Dec. 15th, 1718." Thus begins the record,— "Voted: Left. Philip Goose, Moderator." (If cackling is sometimes heard in town meetings since, what wonder?) Thomas Gilbert was chosen Town Clerk. "The work of the day not being finished" adjourned one week. Mr. Gilbert went to Hartford, Ct., to be qualified for his office.

The next year, 1719, Thomas Barnes and others of the Selectmen of the town, petition on the basis of an order passed May 1701, for a survey and plot for the town "eight miles square." The work being done and the plot lost or "mislayed," another as taken by Timothy Dwight, Surveyor, is offered for acceptance, which was done.

Thus this matron township had territory enough to spare portions to the daughters which soon sprung up around her, Warren, New Braintree, Ware; and more recently the remaining domain has been partitioned into the three goodly municipalities,

—North Brookfield, West Brookfield and Brookfield ; so that the original “ eight miles square ” is now parted among six townships.

The next year, 1720, the “ Town was of opinion that the power was wholly in the Town to make grants of land.” Land was almost the only staple, the currency indeed between the people. An example occurred in 1722. “ In consideration of three pounds in nails, (i. e. the nails costing three pounds,) from y^e hand of Mr. Samuel Porter for use in finishing y^e Meeting House, the town made a grant specified by bounds, be it more or less.” Gratitude, as well as economy, is evident in the payment.

A surprise which I am sure others must have while perusing these records as well as myself, is happily relieved by an act in 1731, the first discovered trace of public care for common schools.

“ Voted. That the Selectmen provid Schooll Dames to keep Schooll in y^e Seuerall parts of the town for 3 or 4 months in the Summer Season.”

“ Voted. That any number of persons that are minded to build a Schooll house may set it up in y^e highway or common Land, near y^e middle of the town.” The same “ prinitige in any other part of the Town,” was voted to any desiring it. The spelling of the votes shows it was high time the school-master should be abroad. We cannot but suppose that schools had been kept during these sixty years of life in the place. In some form, instruction was doubtless given to the children, or this and subsequent action would not be found, as the care for education would have ceased in that long time, unless fed by some rills of instruction invisible to the historian. In 1733, a vote of “ fifty pounds for y^e school for y^e ensuing year ” is seen.

This settlement may indeed have been behindhand with those on the coast, and with those in the valley beyond, in the matter of schools at the outset ; but the eminence of our public schools in recent times, has happily shown a disposition to recompense any early neglects.

Two events of conspicuous consequence appear in the record of 1748. The people in the Northeast part of the town had grown weary of their distance from the sanctuary, and the town being without a minister, by the death of Rev. Mr. Cheney the preceding year, a design for a new precinct was formed. On the 28th of Nov., the petition of Capt. Ebenezer Witt and others, for such a division was refused ; but a generous proposal was offered by the town to grant the petition on certain conditions. Probably the election of Mr. Elisha Harding as minister, (the other noticeable event of the year,) was a large element in this new precinct question, for a quite tempestuous meeting it plainly was, in which the petitioners were repulsed, though they voted concurrence with the church in their choice of Mr. Harding as minister. The meeting was adjourned for four weeks ; and then "after considerable Debat," voted for Mr. Harding's "encouragement to Settle in the Gospel Ministry one thousand pounds old tenor currancy, & for his yearly Sallery & Support, the Sum of five hundred pounds old tenor." This almost over-generous stipend makes us suspect that the rest of the town would pay a free tax themselves, for the sake of bleeding the petitioners for the new precinct down to quietness through their share in it. The negligent orthography of the records betrays a sadly discomposed spirit.

A curious sliding scale was devised at this meeting for Mr. Harding's payment. "Accounting the Same" i. e. the money, "as tho' it be in Indian corn at 20s. pr. bushel. Rye, 30s.

Wheat, 40s. per bushel and so the £500 to be increased or diminished yearly as the prices of the grains varied," — a rather perilous bargain for any but a superhuman minister, and for parishioners, not of like passions as we are. There is an advance, however, apparent in adopting a money basis for pastoral maintenance in place of the entangling land grants of earlier days. Afterwards, liberty was granted him to cut his own firewood on the common land, "s^d Mr. Harding not to mak wast of s^d wood, especially of the young wood."

Next year, 1749, Sept. 13, Mr. Harding was ordained. A brief and troubled ministry was his record. The North-men, *i. e.* men of the north-east part of the town, pressed their suit for parochial separation. The conditions named by the town in the November meeting were fulfilled *in less than ten days, i. e.* fifty and more persons, (and by Dec. 31, eight more) sent their *personal* request for such permission, as had been prescribed. They rested not at that. With an astonishing vigor, on the 5th of April, 1749, the frame of a meeting house was raised on the common, fronting which, Col. Pliny Nye's house now stands. A busy winter for woodmen, hewers and framers, it must have been—to cut, hew, frame and erect the huge timbers some of us remember in that massive frame,—all in the short days of the three winter months! It was an energy prophetic of that which the inhabitants of the North parish have ever shown; and may they never be behind their ancestors in any onward public work. But this haste made waste. The location was not satisfactory. On the 16th of October following, a covenant was signed by forty-two of the inhabitants predicating that several persons of the proposed parish "have been uneasy in the sitting of the Meeting House where the frame now stands." They engaged to abide by an arbitration of disinterested men. The men were

chosen, and decided that the house be built on the spot where the frame was standing. Ten years, however, passed before the building was finished, and indeed repairing and finishing went on together, for in 1764, the precinct "Voted to take the shingles off the Roof of the Meeting house and to repair the same."

An act for a Parish Incorporation was granted March 28, 1750, and a church was embodied May 28, 1752; and the next year, June 3d, Mr. Eli Forbes was ordained pastor. He was a graduate of Harvard College, a class-mate with the eminent Judge Cushing and Mather Byles, D. D. In the year of his decease, 1804, the degree of Doctor in Divinity was conferred on him. His ministry in the "second precinct" as it was commonly styled, ended March 1, 1775. His patriotism was suspected by his parishioners, and their demonstrations toward him were efficient in deciding him to remove. Tradition relates that the suspicious patriots one evening followed his chaise, throwing stones, and epithets, yet harder to bear. A bag of feathers and a pot of tar found on his door stone one morning, determined him to resign. An aged lady whose father was at the church meeting in which the vote was taken, related to me that on the first trial after Mr. F. had stated his reasons, the majority voted against his dismissal. He then addressed the church in such determined language that a majority vote was gained. He published an Artillery Election Sermon in 1771, with a somewhat testy preface indicating in some of its statements, that the sensitiveness of his parishioners may not have been wholly groundless. He died in Gloucester, Mass., in the pastoral office. An excellent portrait of him has been secured (a copy from an old one,) by the present pastor of the church. It is in the chapel of the First Congregational Church.

Returning to the first parish, the people had scarcely attained their composure over the separation of the North parish, when a fresh difficulty began among themselves. In the year 1753, the project of building a new meeting house became a source of trouble and contention. As often since, the question of *locality* divided the people. Three localities were in dispute ;—first, on the top of the hill where the meeting house *then* stood ; second, “on the plain,” where it *now* stands ; and third, “Mr. Seth Banister’s lawn,” where the church edifices of Brookfield are now seen. The people South of the hill would not willingly go up the hill, as they had done, much less go over it, as desired to do ; those West of the hill would go up it as they had done, but would not go over to the “lawn.” The contest as shown in the petitions and projects for precinct meetings was amusingly acute, not to say acrimonious. The *hill*, emphatically *divided* the town, in opinion, as well as in territory. Both divisions called meetings one after another to act on mere tentative opinions. A series of these precinct skirmishes at length drew a proposal from the West side, to give up “the plain” entirely, and to unite on the hill-top. They were a little too late. The South side, with the example of the North precinct before them, determined to cut the knot by a decisive act. They set up the frame of a meeting house “on Mr. Banister’s lot,” in an incredibly short time, expecting to decide the *question*, by doing the *thing*. But timber and self-will were rather more plenty than yielding self-sacrifice, and before the echo of the hewer’s axe had died away, the General Court were moved by the West side to arrest proceedings and to send a committee to view and advise. They came, and after patiently hearing the parties, the committee advised a separation and the erection of a third parish. Their report was accepted Nov. 8, 1754, but the new house lin-

gered in finishing, as did its fellow in the North parish. A church was not gathered until April 15, 1756. It was formed of twenty-five males and fourteen females. Two years after, or May 24th, 1758, Nathan Fiske, A. M., was ordained pastor. He continued in office forty-one years, and died unattended, Sabbath night, Nov. 24th, 1799. "At night he retired apparently in good health, and in his sleep, his spirit departed to its eternal home."—(*Rev. Mr. Ward's Funeral Sermon.*)

His education and talent made him superior to most of the men of his time. He became a Doctor in Divinity in 1792. He was a classmate of Governor John Hancock. An unusual fondness for writing and publishing gave him preëminence over any pastor settled in these churches, in the number and amount of publications. A famed literary club known as the "Minerva Society," gave occasion for a series of essays by him, somewhat in the style of the *Spectator*, which were published. His historical sermon, preached "On the Last Day of the Year 1775," the first local history written of the town,—though singularly inaccurate, yet as a first effort, deserves the gratitude of posterity. He erected the house in which Rev. Mr. Stone, his successor, lived and died and bestowed upon the Evangelical Church and Society.

The first church, though again reduced by the division forming the third parish, nobly went forward to build and finish a new sanctuary. This was done in 1755. The record is worthy a place here. "Jan. 22nd, 1755, Voted, To build a Meeting House for public worship at the turning of the County rode near the North East Corner of a plow Field belonging to John Barns being on the Plain, in said first Precinct." "Voted, That said Meeting house be built with timber and wood." "Voted, That the meeting house shall be forty five feet in

length and thirty five feet in wedth." At the same meeting a committee was chosen "to apply to the 2nd and 3d Precincts in said town for their proportion of right in the old meeting house frame." Animosity to the "2nd Precinct," is seen in votes refusing Jabez Upham, and others, leave to be "sett off" to join it. A committee was chosen to go to General Court and resist such petitions, but in August their rigor was relaxed, and the negative votes were "Reconsidered and Disannulled."

The "Pewfloor" was estimated by a committee—none to be more than £3 10s. nor less than 25 shillings. This was a period of vigorous agitations in the now triplicated parish, but the mother showed marked dignity and skill in conducting herself toward the sensitive daughters. The superior men plainly were there, and their calmer judgment and higher character imparted pleasing wisdom to their conduct of affairs. But the heaving tides of the time, either brought all the latent discontents with the pastor, (Rev. Mr. Harding,) to the surface, or gave tempting occasion for their utterance. Pending a scheme to assess all the inhabitants of the three precincts, to pay the grant of £64, made to Mr. Harding as settlement, this significant vote is recorded: that "said first precinct will relinquish to the third precinct in said town all their right and claim to the Rev. Elisha Harding as a minister free and clear of any demands for or towards his settlement, provided the said *third* precinct will receive the said Mr. Harding as a minister."

Another vote sent Thomas Gilbert to the General Court, for their determination as to which precinct Rev. Mr. Harding "shall belong;" and "that there may be nothing said by the Society receiving him as to paying their proportion of his settlement." These votes occur in the first three meetings after the organization of the third parish, which was Nov. 8, 1754.

These pointed discontents had their effect in forcing him to resign, and May 7, 1755, a council of five churches assembled, and after tenderly but plainly stating his case, terminated this never very happy connection.

In the American Quarterly Register,* he is briefly mentioned as "a gentleman of great benevolence, and his public ministrations were serious and adapted to edify and benefit his hearers. He was distinguished for his probity and literary acquisitions."

Two years after, February 1, 1757, Mr. Nehemiah Strong of Hadley was chosen pastor. He declined, because "the encouragement for his maintenance was so slender,"—"£45 lawful silver money the first year," to increase to £60 by the sixth year, and to continue at that, also "thirty cords of wood, cordwood length and delivered at his door;" was the offer. In his refusal he speaks of the insufficiency of the sum, "in such a place, where I shall be necessitated to expend extraordinaries in Ways of Hospitality," showing that Brookfield was then, as ever since, a favorite stopping place for good men on journeys.

A call to Joseph Parsons, Jr. of Bradford, the same year, was successful, and November 23, 1757 he was ordained. His excellent ministry was closed by death in the beginning of 1771, in the thirty-eighth year of his age. During the last three years of his ministry he was so feeble as to be unable to preach, and affectionate references in the records of the time, reveal a mutual esteem between people and pastor. At the meeting in March after his decease, Dea. Thos. Rich was directed "to procure & set up at the Rev. Mr. Jos. Parson's grave proper, decent grave stones in memory of the dead." Twenty-four shillings were to be expended.

Rev. Ephraim Ward succeeded. He was ordained October

* Vol. x. p. 53.

23, 1771, just as the shadows of the Revolution began to darken the horizon of the land. He was esteemed through his pastorate,—which was little short of 47 years,—as the urbane Christian scholar, illustrating the graces of the village pastor. So admirably pictured by the godly Herbert—

“ as a tender father
Doth teach and rule the Church and is obey'd,
And revered by it, so much the rather,
By how much he delighted more to lead
All by his own example in the way,
Than punish any when they go astray.”

His colleague and successor, Eliakim Phelps, D. D. enriches our festival by his presence. He entered on his ministry here October 23, 1816, which was the forty-fifth anniversary of Mr. Ward's ordination, and shared with him the choice intimacies of the joint pastorate about two years. Ten years and two days from his ordination, October 25, 1826,—he was released from his charge that he might assume the preceptorship of a once famed “Classical Female School,” which for some years flourished here. Rev. Joseph I. Foote was installed on the day of Dr. Phelps' dismissal; memorable for his research and reproduction of our too long neglected annals, after a ministry of nearly six years, retired, and after some years of labor in other places, died by a casualty on the day before which he was to have been inaugurated President of Washington College, Tenn. Of him and his several successors, who all now are living, some future annalist will weave the chaplet of deserved honors.

But it is more than time to present a few of the honored citizen names adorning our history. Joseph Dwight, Brigadier General, and judge in the county court, Berkshire, for a time resided here. His military career was chiefly in connection with the expedition to Louisburgh in 1745. He was one of the gover-

nor's council, which at that period was an eminent station, and connected him with the chief men of his day. Joshua Upham was son of a physician in Brookfield, born 1741. He and Dwight were both graduates of Harvard College, and from their eminence, doubtless contributed much to the growth of the town, by guiding public attention to it and persuading settlers to choose homes here. General Dwight removed to Great Barrington, where he died June 9, 1765. Quite early in life Judge Upham (as he became), built here one of the first woolen factories ever attempted in this country, (1768.)

The great colonial contest for freedom with the mother country found him a loyalist, or tory, as then styled. This removed him to Boston, and soon after to New York, where he joined the British army, and served as aid-de-camp to Lord Dorchester, and afterwards colonel of dragoons. In the service of the Province of New Brunswick he went to London in 1807 and died there the next year.

Judges Dorr, Merrick, Crosby and Foster, all mingled freely in town and parish affairs, imparting their culture, wisdom and energy to its proceedings, and communicating the honors of their high official stations to their town homes.

Joseph Dorr, Judge of the Court of Common Pleas and Judge of Probate, came to Brookfield from Ward — now Auburn. He graduated at Cambridge, 1752, and after filling several public stations died in this town October 31, 1808, aged 78. Pliny Merrick was son of the minister of Wilbraham, where he was born September 14, 1756. He graduated at Cambridge, 1776, and studied divinity with a clergyman in Springfield, and preached occasionally for several years. His feeble health hindered him from settlement. To improve it, he spent two years as a teacher in Virginia, and finding no essential benefit, re-

turned, and after the requisite study of the law at Bridgewater, was admitted to the Bar in Plymouth County, 1787. In the spring of 1788, he came to Brookfield, where he remained until his death, March 2, 1814. He was made Justice of the Court of Sessions in 1807, and chosen Senator for the county in 1808. His residence yet stands next to the first Meeting House of the Evangelical Congregationalist Church. He used to express his great attachment to his pastor,—Rev. Mr. Stone,—by saying that if any man spoke evil of him in his presence, he would instantly knock him down. He had lived in Virginia!

Oliver Crosby, a native of Brookfield, born June, 1766, became a justice of the Court of Common Pleas in 1814, and the next year was elected a Senator for the county. Though not publicly educated, he raised himself to rare eminence by self-culture. He was for some years one of the chief men of Brookfield. His decease occurred July 24, 1818.

Jabez Upham, son of Phineas, was born in Brookfield. By self-exertion he gained a degree at Cambridge, 1785. He attained distinction as a lawyer and was twice elected Representative to Congress.

But the name ever preëminent in the annals of Brookfield, is that of Jedediah Foster. From that home of good men, the town of Andover, he came here to begin his public life not far from 1745, graduating at Cambridge the preceding year. He was chosen Major of forces raised in 1751, when the French and Indians endangered the country. In the "Provincial Congress" he had a seat, and the people chose him colonel before there was a government to issue commissions. He was Judge of Probate and of the Supreme Court. In March 1779, he was in the Convention at Cambridge, assembled to form a constitution, and one of the committee for drafting it. But his citizen character

should be specially commemorated in these pages. The perusal of our records will show that no man has ever dwelt among us, who held so many local trusts,—lived in such intimate sympathy with the people, cared for and served them so abundantly and excellently,—and yet so far excelled them in station and character. He projected and carried through more that is to be prized in our town life, than could be recounted for hours. In church affairs, and for a time, in civil concerns, Deacon Henry Gilbert is more frequently visible; and he and his descendants may justly claim an estimable preëminence in the early history of the town. Their ancestry and posterity were alike honorable. Sir Humphrey Gilbert, seen in history in company with Sir Walter Raleigh, is supposed to have been among the ancestral connections.

No one perusing our early records will fail to see that Foster and Gilbert bore the trusts of the town more fully by far than any other citizens. We esteem that to be the highest style of citizen manhood which gains and holds the affectionate confidence of the worthiest of the common people through all the tests of every-day life; and at the same time finds high position given to it among eminent statesmen, jurists and scholars of the times. Few men more completely unite these conditions than Judge Foster. Let an illustration of each class suffice. Some years before his death the church in this town made choice of him for deacon,—“He suspended his answer,” say the records, “till the church consented to introduce Tate and Brady’s Psalms, on trial, then gave it in the affirmative.” Thus he achieved a reform in that proverbially sensitive part of public worship, the singing, and that in a somewhat stubborn generation, by coupling a sacred public benefit with his acceptance of a humble office which his station in life enabled him to honor by accepting, rather than to derive honor from it.

The other illustration :— As the Provincial Congress at Philadelphia was dispersing, in 1775, General Washington inquired who were the Massachusetts men on whom he could especially rely in the great struggle before the colonies. Mr. Foster of Brookfield was named among others as one to whom the Commander-in-Chief could confide his counsels, and from whom he could expect unwavering fidelity as a patriot. A man so minutely careful for the welfare of a village church, and so wise in advancing its prosperity, and so beloved by them ; and marked in the distant council chamber of the comparatively unacquainted colonies as one of a few upon whom the newly chosen chief could place special trust, presents a character of eminent completeness and worth. It deserves our affectionate, reverent honor. We ought to devise some memorial to keep his name on the lips of generations ; some broad avenue, some prized school, or public institution dear to the hearts of the people and rich in benefits common to all.

In the other precinct, the North, at that period, the names of Ayers, Bigelow, Hale, Gilbert, Adams, Witt, Potter and others were borne by men of comprehensive enterprise, and of great executive force of character. They were really choice men for framing the precedents, and putting in motion a well-ordered and efficient town life. They deserve a fuller tribute than will ever be written of them.

Passing the uneventful lull, which followed the stormy dozen years in which date the division of the town into three precincts, —the building of three meeting-houses— the dismissal of one, and the settlement of three new ministers,—a docket of labors deserving a period of repose—we reach the first recorded tokens of the Revolution.

May 17, 1773 a meeting was held. Jedediah Foster, moder-

ator,—to choose a committee to send “A Letter of thanks to the Town of Boston for their care in Stating a list of the Infringements and Violations, of Rights * * made by the Court and Parliament of Great Britian, and to show that the town fully concur with the Town of Boston in Sentiment, etc.” Names from each of the precincts are on this committee. The letter, doubtless from the pen of Foster, after being twice read, was recorded on the books, and sent to Boston. One sentence of this letter should be in every Brookfield household. “This Town will ever be ready to assert, and in every legal and proper way maintain those *Rights and Liberties for our children*, which were with so much Labor, Blood and Treasure, purchased by our ancestors whose memory is and ought to be esteemed by us.”

The patriotism of the entire document seems at this distance almost sublime. It would touchingly befit a town meeting during the iniquitous rebellion raised by the oppressors at this day.

December 27, 1773 a meeting was held and two letters from the town of Boston were read. Foster, Baldwin, Rice, Upham and Gilbert, were chosen to consider and report a proper resolve relative to the importation of tea from Great Britian, “And such other matters as are proper for this town to do at this difficult time.”

“In about one hour,” the committee returned and reported, (after preamble,) “we think it our indispensable duty in the most public manner, to let the world know our utter abhorrence of the last and most detestable scheme in the introduction of tea from Great Britain, to be peddled out among us, by which means we were to be made to swallow a poison more fatal in its effects to the natural and political rights and privilege of the people of this country than *ratsbane would be to the natural body*.”

Alas for the China sets, the pride of our mothers ! This burst of patriotic rhetoric, however, is followed by sentences of nobler patriotism. "Loyalty & fidelity to our most gracious King, George the Third, & due obedience to the government under him, by Divine Providence & by Law established in this Province, we will to the utmost of our power maintain and defend. An uninterrupted Friendship & Commerce with the Country of our Fathers' nativity, we wish to continue to the latest Generation ; *but our dear bought rights & privileges we will never tamely give up.*" Further on they say, "of our dearest civil & religious privileges when wrested from us, we shall not think our lives and property too much to be spent in their defence and recovery." The self-denial and determined sacrifice in those words, prophesied, as they deserved, the success which crowned the wearisome strife.

In May 1774, another letter, much like the former, was sent to Boston. "June 21. At a very full meeting of the inhabitants,"—after reading several letters from committees in Boston and Worcester,—three citizens were deputed "to wâte on the Rev. Mr. Ward, and desire him to attend and open this meeting with prayer, and the request was complied with in a very sollom manner." Letters and covenants were then read "and long debate thereon." A number of persons signed the covenants. A committee of six were chosen "to inspect the Traders of this Town and see that they do comply with the covenants, and to see that every person had the offer of signing the covenant, and also to take care that peddlars do not sell any goods in this Town."

These patriotic *town meetings* were frequent, and in them instructions to Representatives and other officers, very ably drawn; correspondence with the chief towns, and local com-

mittees, all show the presence of active and strong leaders. Jedediah Foster was chosen Representative to General Court, and in December to a Provincial Congress to be held at Cambridge; and at the same meeting "Voted unanimously, that this town do fully approve of the association of the Continental Congress, and that they will strictly adhere to the same in all respects." Also voted, That the ministers be desired to notify contributions for the Boston sufferers, and David Hitchcock, John Baldwin, and Seth Banister, Jr. (one from each precinct,) were chosen to receive the same and transport them to Boston. A corps of minute men was resolved on, to "be immediately equipped with an effective fire-arm, cartridge box, knapsack, and thirty rounds of Powder and ball," and that they should "take extraordinary pains to acquire the skill of compleat soldiers." These were in addition to the regularly enrolled militia. Generous provisions for paying these minute men for training time was also made. A curious covenant, as 'tis styled, was drawn, to which one enlisting should subscribe. The heart of the town was swelling with the keen throes of fear and determined sacrifice if called to it, in the coming contest. Town meetings were frequent, and "long debate," is a repeated description of them. In reverent admiration and surprise, we come upon the records of a meeting held May 22, 1776. "The question was asked in the words of a resolve of the General Court whether this Town would support the Hon'ble Congress in the measure if they for our liberty should see fit to declare the colonies Independent of Great Britain, *and it passed in the affirmative almost unanimously.*" Honor to the Brookfield patriots! Their declaration of Independence, is one month and twelve days older than that of the Congress. Foremost in declaring, may they be the last in resigning or betraying the priceless Freedom so gloriously won!

Near the close of this year (1776) a record of singular interest occurs. A bounty of £60 is levied to be paid for "one hundred fire-arms with a bayonet affixed thereto, provided they are wholly manufactured in this town within one year." Where was the Brookfield armory, and who made muskets and bayonets here eighty-four years ago?

At the March meeting next year (1777), it was "Voted, That the Town may wear their hats excepting when they speak in publick in Town meeting." At the same meeting "A list of the price of articles" was adopted. These lists, common to the towns at that time, were fatal checks to speculators and mercenary plunderers of the public in the time of general distress. A few of the items will repay copying.

"Farming labour,—from the 20th day of June, to the 20th day of August, shall not exceed 3 shillings per day, and from the 20th day of Nov'r to the 20th day of Jan'y, shall not exceed 1s. 6d. per day. Indian corn meal shall not exceed 3s. per B^l., good grass-fed beef 2½ pence per lb., stall-fed do., 3d. Good butter, 9¼ pence per lb., firkin do., 8¼ per lb. Good yard wide Tow cloth 2s. per yard. Striped y'd wide flanel 3s. 4d. Good Walnut wood 8 ft. long, 8s. per cord. Oak do., 7s., "each cord to be delivered at the door of the buyer." "A good meal of meat victuals of the common sort shall not exceed 9d." "For making men's shoes shall not exceed 2s. 8d. per pair." "A Doctor shall not exceed 6d. (sixpence) per mile in his charge in travel to visit his Patience." "For men's common boarding by the week shall not exceed 7s." In suggestive sagacity the prices of N. E. toddy and "phlip" and other strong drinks are put at the foot and most obscure part of the long file, as if they were the last articles ever to be needed or bought. Well for the town had they been always so. How

long this municipal protection was kept in force, or what special good came from it, does not appear.

But, keeping step with the progress of freedom, in April, 1777, "Voted, That the inhabitants of this town will not only strictly adhere to and observe the act of the General Court called the Regulating Act, But also use our utmost endeavors to detect and bring to punishment those unfriendly selfish persons who at this important crisis shall have the effrontery to counteract the good and wholesome laws of this State." In November of this year a committee of nine persons were appointed "to provide for the families of the non-commissioned officers and soldiers that are in the Continental Army." The next year, March 25th, 1778, "Voted to accept of the Confederacy of the Continental Congress and to enjoin it to their (our) Representatives that they consent to the same." And in the same ready mind, the next year, May 20th, 1779, they voted for a State Convention "for the sole purpose of forming a new Constitution." In October of this year, a shadow spread over the town in the death of the Hon. Judge Foster. From the beginning of the great era of struggle for National Liberty, he is constantly seen, not alone presiding over, but shaping and administering the counsels of the town. The public mind safely trusted in him in those dark hours, and with eminent wisdom and fidelity did he guide the confiding people. We can hardly overrate the pressure upon the inhabitants at that time; *one man in seven* in the North precinct had been drafted, and not much different could it have been through all the town. In the year 1777, they voted "to raise no money for schooling," so far spent was their revenue; and four years after, they were obliged to hire money to equip the soldiers before they could leave town for the army. But Divine Providence did not leave the people,

led through so many deliverances, without the needed leaders. The year of his father's death, Dwight Foster,—born in Brookfield, Dec. 7, 1757, graduated at Brown University (1774,) a lawyer for a time in Providence, R. I.,—returned to his native town. He was a young man of rare promise and his townsmen discerned it. At the town meeting in May, “Voted: Mr. Dwight Foster, Moderator, 143 yeas in favor of the new Constitution and 11 against it!” This curt record shows his first public service,—the highest the town could confer; and at almost the first opportunity after his return. Reverence for the father doubtless quickened the heart of the people to honor the son. It was an auspicious omen to preside in such a meeting at the outset of his public life; and three weeks later, May 24, he was chosen to represent the town in General Court. He was then 22 years of age. At the same meeting a long and statesman-like document was read, said to be in his handwriting. It relates to the ratification and adoption of the Constitution for the State. He was chosen delegate to the convention held in Boston the next month, “To complete the Constitution and Frame of Government.” His great eminence came from laborious industry, “*rising before it was light*” for study. He was a model to young men, in method, order, promptness and the great facility in the management of business, which come from it. “Though of delicate and uncertain health” he accomplished much. In addition to the honors named, he was the successor of Judge Sprague in the office of High Sheriff of the County,—Chief Justice of the Court of Common pleas, for ten years,—an Elector of President and Vice President when Washington was chosen Chief Magistrate the second time,—a member of the Governor's Council,—a Representative in Congress from 1793 to 1801, and a Senator during the two succeeding years.

He died April 29, 1823, at the age of sixty-six. Hon. Jabez Upham shares with him the honors of representing the State in Congress. Mr. Foster alone of our citizens, had a seat in the Senate.

In 1781, the town was districted by Parishes, as the precincts are thereafter styled. This was done in order to raise soldiers for three years, and committees were chosen to enlist and hire men. They were empowered to "hire such sum or sums of money" as they needed. The enlistment of Continental soldiers was a work of conspicuous concern during this period.

As the tasks of the Revolution were ending, the new questions of self-government engaged anxious attention. Entire pages of the records are filled with reports and resolves upon the fundamental question of civil government. Numerous and elaborate instructions were drawn up for representatives. One is "To the Respectable Capt. Phinehas Upham our Representative."

In 1784 the representative is most loyally instructed thus — "Thirdly, It is the opinion of this Town that the articles of Confederation and perpetual union between the Thirteen United States, being ratified and established by each State in the Union, *are solemnly binding on the several States : and that no attempt ought to be made to dissolve or weaken the same ;* but on the other hand if we mean to support our dignity as a nation, *every effort ought to be used to strengthen the Union and render the Bonds indissoluble.*"

This specific instruction might usefully be copied for not a few representing the people at this day. Infamy, endless infamy be on the heads of *sons* who, after all these years of blessing, have degenerated to traitors to the noble town-meeting loyalty of our fathers.

In 1785, a division of the county was urged by the towns in the north part. A long and able protest was presented against it by Foster, Hall and Upham.

The Shays rebellion has little place in the town records. Many of the citizens served as soldiers, and the rebel leader himself had served as a hired man with Daniel Gilbert, Esqr., in the North Parish.

A violent attack of economy was experienced by the town in May of the next year. "Voted: That the person who shall be chosen to represent the Town shall return all the money's he shall receive over and above 5*d.* per day for his services at the General Court, exclusive of travelling fees, to the Treasurer of said Town!"

In 1791, the question of dividing the county again returned, and the selectmen of *eleven* adjacent towns were to be invited to call meetings in those towns to choose committees to a conference to be held at the house of Joseph Reed, Esqr. No result appears on the records. In October of this year is found the first recorded warrant for a meeting.

In 1799, an article in the Town warrant shows that Nicholas Jenks and others had prayed to be incorporated as a separate religious (Baptist) Society. A protest was voted against it, because the petition was in its principles exceptionable and in its operation would tend to the injury not only to the inhabitants aforesaid, but of the society themselves. It states the "opinion that the rights of conscience ought ever to be held sacred, and that all denominations of christians demeaning themselves peaceably have an inalienable right of worshiping their Creator agreeably to its dictates." The protest failed and the Baptist Church and Society of East Brookfield is the result of the petitioners endeavor.

The century closed under the shadow of that great national bereavement, which also closed an era, *the death of Washington*. The town with patriotic reverence called its eminent citizen, Hon. Pliny Merrick, to pronounce an eulogy on the beloved Father of his Country ; for which service done on the 22nd of February following, he received " the thanks of the inhabitants," with the request of a copy for publication.

This century of town-life beginning as it did, amid savage tragedies ; the settlement in the wilderness far from neighbors ; with no extended natural feature, like sea coast, great river, or national road, and with no surpassing soil, or forests, or mines, was yet a remarkably prosperous century.

Superior personal character can safely be claimed for many of the early settlers. Their enterprise, wisdom and culture, gave the town a memorable eminence among the sister settlements which, before the close of the century, surrounded it. The names of Gilbert, Foster, Hale, Merrick, Crosby, Upham, Ayres, Reed, Hamilton and Hitchcock, are set in our early history by counsels, acts and beneficent public influence, which would adorn any annals and ensure success to any rising settlement. These are but a part of the names that claim the grateful esteem of the posterity enriched by their endurance, wisdom and sacrifice. Each, family discerned through the deepening shadows now settling on them, seems almost entitled to special mention. The municipal acquirements found among our fathers rather surprise us. No roads, bridges, or large city from which to bring the implements or fruits of mechanism aided them. Until about the close of the former century not a wheel vehicle had passed from the River to Boston. On horseback all riding was done ; and as horses were few, the roads blind, crooked, rough and perilous, travel was slow and infrequent. A short distance

made a long and perilous journey. We wonder at the *rapid*, not at the *slow* growth of the town. The century had been truly a prosperous one. The town was well advanced in culture and mechanic arts at the close of it. "Seven grist-mills, six saw-mills and three fulling-mills," were counted in it ten years before the new century began. "Mr. Jenks," says an annalist, "besides his mills prosecutes the blacksmiths' business largely, and has two trip-hammers and a grindstone carried by water." "Ellis & Company," he adds, "annually dress about 5000 yards of cloth at their works." They had reached the art of coloring scarlet, equal to that imported, "an art which few in this commonwealth have attained unto." Earlier is narrated the establishment of "one of the first wollen factories ever attempted in this country" by Joshua Upham in 1768, and the bounty offered for one hundred muskets manufactured in the town, show a remarkable advance in those trades. Watches were made in the South parish by Mr. Ephraim Kingsbury, about 1799, several years before they were made in Worcester. Mr. Cyrus Dean, now living in Brookfield,* learned his trade of that watchmaker, and still occupies the original shop. A Printing Press was set up here by Isaiah Thomas of Worcester in 1794, "a Printing House and Bookstore," he termed it. In connection with an apprentice named Waldo, a newspaper was offered to the public in September of that year, called "The Worcester Intelligencer or Brookfield Advertiser." This name gave place to "The Moral and Political Telegraph or Brookfield Advertiser." The ownership and title were again changed to "The Political Repository and Farmer's Journal, by E. Merriam & Co., 1798." But a short life was the portion of the

* While these pages are in press, Mr. Dean died at Brookfield, August 20th, 1866, aged 83 years.

varied experiment. The editors strangely overlooked local news ; or what are now items of interest have only brief mention. Thus :—" Tuesday, March, 26, 1799, the President of the United States lodged in this town, on Thursday night last, on his way to his seat in Quincy." No more is said. A republican quietness toward dignity, truly ! The numbers I have seen relate very little of affairs in the town or region. The "business and bosoms" of the inhabitants are very dimly visible in the columns. The letters by Post, however, are all published. The office here served for people in Paxton, Hardwick, New Braintree and all the Brookfields, and even then the weekly list is smaller than some single establishments now receive in as many days. To the honor of the newspaper, an enterprising article, a column in length, is found in 1799, advocating and projecting a *canal from Worcester to Providence, R. I.* Thirty years after, the vision became a reality. But though the newspaper failed, the printing did not. Ebenezer Merriam carried on the business of printing books, etc., for fifty years, dying in 1858, at the age of 80. That "Printing House and Bookstore" were educators for all the region. Many of us remember the curious awe felt as we walked by the long, low, old and unpainted "Printing House." A mystery which stimulated the finest aspirations of young and growing minds was upon it. Well do I remember how precious a single capital P was esteemed, which a lad had brought from the "house." The spirit of knowledge seemed to lurk in the dull lead. The town is indebted to the enterprising man who kept that humble lamp burning here through all those years, and in addition to all other benefits, trained and sent from it, that trio of sons who have put the whole English speaking world under obligations by their grand enterprize, the publication of their unrivalled Dictionary of the

English Language, by Noah Webster ! Their successor in the art may be creating obligations on posterity by framing into the printed page the records you are now perusing, grateful reader.

For the early settlers, there were but few physical comforts. The stern necessities of life were very scantily softened in their pressure by what we term comforts. Coarse was their fare, rough and scanty their garb, and very rude their dwellings. What to us would be extremely plain food was nearly luxury to them. The scarcity of cattle made meat uncommon in the diet of the early inhabitants. And groceries, as we term them, could scarcely have been known. Birch bark for paper and a decoction of alder bark for ink, was the outfit of many a brave boy and sprightly girl even after schools were established by law. Through all the earlier years an overshadowing dread oppressed the dwellers. Memory and imagination thronged with visions of lurking Indians, and the boundless forests on every side of them was indeed "a land shadowing with wings." The howl of the wild animal, the inexplicable sounds and sights coming from the unpathed woods, and the fabulous terrors told over, in the grim, cavernous chimney corners, all conspired in diffusing a secret and oppressive dread. It was a century of ghostly tales. The traces of an old cellar are still visible, where dwelt a reputed witch whose incantations were credulously recited in my boyhood. It was in a wild forest far from other dwellings. Imaginative and irreligious people felt those delusions more than others.

But an intensified social dependence and confidence in each other, brought some compensating reliefs. Neighbors valued each other in a manner unknown to us. They cared for, protected and loved one another, and had the rewards of it. Few families were blighted by drunkenness or by any vice. A drunk-

ard, or a broken character was an abhorred anomaly, we believe, for the first fifty years. Life, too, was long and vigorous. In 1782, a Mr. Green, above 90 years of age followed his fifth child, a woman in her 62d year, above four miles to her grave, "riding erect and steady on a lively horse." He died in New Hampshire, above 100 years old. In the same year, 1782, died in this town, Elizabeth Olds, in her 92d year. She counted 10 children, 73 grand-children, 201 great-grand-children, and two of the fifth generation; two of her daughters being grandmothers, making a total of her descendants 286; and of these all but 54, or 232 were living at the time of her decease. About the time above mentioned, the last survivor, as was supposed, of Lovewell's fight of May 8, 1725, was living here, Mr. Thomas Ainsworth. He died January 1794, aged 85.

These narrations suggest another feature of our towns,—the burying places. The world over, parcels of ground devoted as resting places for the dead, are found; though in many neighborhoods the less secure and less natural mode of private or home lots are seen; and generally from change of occupants, fallen into unsightly neglect, or on their way to it. Such a burial place is scarce to be found in the original Brookfield. In the true friendliness of fellow mortality, dust mingles with dust in common grave-yards, rather than in selfish, isolated little enclosures scattered over all the lands. The place of the earliest burials here is not known. Tradition indicates that it was near a road connecting the Foster Hill with the main road east of the meeting house. An aged citizen, Mr. Pelatiah Hitchcock, who deceased some years ago, was accustomed to point out the graves of the six men, (slain in 1710, in the meadow Northeast of the present Railroad station,) near the entrance to what is known as the old burying ground. Two men killed by the Indians

between West and North Brookfield are said to have been the first buried there. One tradition is, that the six men were buried there because the fog concealed the procession, as people gathered to bury them, from the Indians. This *may* have determined the site to that ground; but the reapings of death for nearly fifty years before, must have made some common garner needful, and so distinct as to be discernable till now. On this account I doubt the tradition found in the "Historical Discourse," and mentioned above. The "old ground" was probably the *first* and *only* ground. There was no such dispersion as the note referred to supposes. Inhabitants were here all the time, and graves perpetually mark the dwelling places of men. Through the entire forty years preceeding the last century, the living were here, and death was doing its work among them.

"At a legal meeting of the inhabitants of Brookfield, on the twenty-fifth day of October, 1756, Cap^t. Nathaniel Woolcot, Mod^r. Voted that five acres be staked out for a Burying place in the Ministry Lott."

"Voted that the Selectmen be a Committee to stake out said five acres."

"On Monday y^e 17 day of April 1760 (adjourned to the 27th) Voted to accept the plan of five acres as it was staked out by the Committee and planned by Mr. James Whitcomb, Surveyor; and ordered that it be put into the book of Records. Said five acres to be for a burying place."

There is in the book a Surveyor's sketch, with the boundary marks given.

In the warrant for the March meeting, 1808, the fifteenth article is as follows:

"To see if the town will fence the Burial ground in the third Precinct or grant the Land to the said 3rd Precinct and allow

them the rents now due, upon condition that any individual of said Town may make use of the same ; or otherwise to do and act upon said subject as they shall think proper."

Voted to refer the substance of this article to Messrs. Thomas Hale, Esqr., John Gleason and Lt. Rufus Hamilton as a Committee."

March 13, 1809. "Voted to accept the report of Committee respecting the Burial Ground belonging to this Town, and that Capt. Simeon Draper, Lt. Jason Bigelow, Lt. Robert Cutler be a Committee to spend the money now due for Rents of said Burial ground in building and repairing the fence of said Burial ground."

The following is the report referred to in the 4th article of the warrant. (The article under which the above vote was passed.)

"We, the subscribers, being appointed by the Inhabitants of the Town of Brookfield a Committee to take into consideration the Propriety of the Towns fencing the burial ground in the 3rd Parish in said Town, or grant the said burial ground to the said 3rd Parish with the Rents which may be now due to said Town, agreeable to an article in the warrant for March meeting, 1808. Your Committee having attended to the business of their appointment, ask leave to report as our Opinion that it is not expedient to grant the said burial ground to the Inhabitants of s^d 3rd Parish, as there are many People in the other Parishes that have buried their Friends in said ground. But we would further report as our opinion that the Town should as soon as may be convenient compleat a good Wall adjoining the post Road and make a good and convenient gate for People to pass and repass to said burial ground and also to rebuild so much of

the Fence on the East side of said burial ground, as may be compleated with the Rents now due, and the Remainder as soon as the Rents may be sufficient for the Purpose, which is submitted.

Thomas Hale,
Rufus Hamilton,
John Gleason.

March 13, 1809.

N. B. We find due to the Town, \$33.

The affairs of the present century properly belong to the *Tri-centennial* orator. I will not much invade his field. Civilly, the main events are the erection of the *three precincts*, of the former century, into *three townships*. North Brookfield, the first to separate parochially, came first to separate town estate. The first recorded movement for it, is a petition, not very strongly drawn, or honorably signed, dated June 2d, 1810. It failed. The next year, a much fuller and more suitable petition, persuaded the Legislature to constitute the precinct a town. The act passed February 27, 1812. The fortunes of a political party were so much dependent on the success of the plan, that they helped it forward very efficiently. The Great Ruler had ends as high above theirs, as the heavens are above these hills. He has been and is making those ends sure. They failed, in the first party trial after the act. The first town meeting was held Tuesday, March 10, 1812. Daniel Gilbert, Esq., was Moderator, Moses Bond, Town Clerk.

Immediate prosperity smiled on the new Town. The manufacture of shoes for distant markets began near this time, quickening all the pulses of industry; busying many hands before idle; making a market for produce of the soil, before unsaleable, and by growing resources diffusing the culture and comforts of life to an extent reached in but few towns. Many young men

were drawn from other towns and states, giving numbers, energy and character to the town, which have raised it to a praiseworthy rank among her neighbors. Its late patriarch pastor, Thomas Snell, D. D., published several narratives of town and parish history; a sermon on the fortieth anniversary of his settlement June 24, 1838; a sermon on the fiftieth anniversary of his settlement June 27, 1848; a Historical Sketch of the Town, May 28, 1850; a Discourse, containing an Historical Sketch of the First Congregational Church in North Brookfield one hundred years from its organization, May 28, 1852. The local history of the town has hence been quite well cared for, and will, we trust, be more so in future.

In 1848, the two remaining parishes after a companionship of nearly a century, took each, the forms of a separate township. Both held their first town meetings March 27, 1848. In the original settlement, thenceforth known as West Brookfield, Alanson Hamilton presided at the first meeting, Jacob Dupee was chosen Town Clerk. This meeting was opened with prayer by Rev. Leonard S. Parker, then pastor. In Brookfield, Alfred Rice was the first Moderator, and Washington Tufts the first Town Clerk.

Thus the ancient Quaboag, first a glimmering plantation, its light almost put out in blood ere its infancy was passed; then a trio of precincts or ecclesiastical municipalities, showing that *religion* preceded in importance all other public concerns; these parishes then ripening into townships, thus completed in two centuries the progress from the most elemental, to the maturest forms of civilized life under republican institutions. Through a wasting and very critical revolution, through much internal, as well as public conflict, the ancestry and the posterity kept alive the spirit and form of true freedom and the simple church polity

which shaped and educated that freedom. The plain vital doctrines of the gospel have been preached ; taught in families, in sabbath schools, and in the social intercourse of the people ; and patriotism, education, peaceful and cultured social life have been the visible results.

Reverently we listen to the whisper of our forefathers as the poet utters it :

“ Blood of ours is on the meadow,
Dust of ours is in the soil,
But no tablet casts a shadow
Where we slumber from our toil.”

But better than any tablet with its shadow, shall be the monument of our unfaltering fidelity to the religious and civil principles which made them the men they were, and which as faithfully cherished by us as by them, will make us worthy of them.

You will expect me to recall a group of three reverend men whose lives and toils so remarkably interblend on this soil, and in the yet unwritten history of this generation. I mean the pastors Fiske, Snell and Stone. Hand in hand they are seen together through the larger half of this century, (the wives too of their youth beside them), until the last in the group had added to our historic treasures his half-century sermon. Their last meeting was in the pulpit of the second in order of age and settlement (now the sole survivor*) at the installation of his colleague, Rev. Mr. Cushing. In the religious life under their ministries in the service of Christ,—in schools,—in domestic culture, in awaking and forming the mind of this generation, who can estimate their beneficent influence.

* Thomas Snell, D. D., died May 4, 1862, aged 87. John Fiske, D. D., died March 15, 1855, aged 81. Rev. Micah Stone died September 21, 1852, in the 82nd year of his age.

The profound Edmund Burke said "when ancient opinions and rules of life are taken away, the loss cannot possibly be estimated." It behooves us to be mindful lest the removal of our "*ancient men*" effects the extinction of "*ancient opinions and rules of life.*"

As we began—so will we close—thankfully accepting the *welcome* we find and feel from each other, from all the past, and from the scenes amid which we assemble.

An eminent poet, who in his boyhood, dwelt in the parsonage at North Brookfield for a time as a pupil to his uncle, the pastor abovenamed, has woven into verse for another like occasion, the story of this observance.

"Two hundred times has June renewed
Her roses, since the day
When here, amid the lonely wood
Our fathers met to pray.

Beside this gentle stream, that strayed
Through pathless woodlands then,
The calm heroic women prayed
And grave, undaunted men.

Hymns on the ancient silence broke
From hearts that fluttered not,
And undissembling lips that spoke
The free and guileless thought.

They prayed, and thanked the Mighty One
Who made their hearts so strong,
And led them towards the setting sun,
Beyond the reach of wrong.

For them He made that desert place
A pleasant heritage,—
The cradle of a free born race
From peaceful age to age.

The plant they set—a little vine—
Hath stretched its boughs afar,

To distant hills and streams that shine
Beneath the evening star.

Ours are their fields,—these fields that smile
With summer's early flowers :
Oh, let their fearless scorn of guile
And love of truth, be ours ! ''

ODE by W. C. Bryant, Esq., for the Bi-Centennial Celebration at Hadley, June
8, 1859.

APPENDIX.

THE TWO CELEBRATIONS.

An observance preliminary to that of 1860, was held July 3d, 1858. The call to it, and the Report of it in the *Boston Journal* of July 5, 1858, preserve the essential record and incidents of it.

BROOKFIELD, MASS., May 22d, 1858.

DEAR SIR: The undersigned, a Committee appointed for the purpose, by the citizens of Brookfield, North Brookfield, and West Brookfield, respectfully invite you, with your family, to join us on Saturday, the third of July next, for the purpose of meeting your old friends of this ancient town, and participating with them in the celebration of our National Independence.

HON. PLINY MERRICK, of Boston,
HON. DWIGHT FOSTER, of Worcester,
SIMEON DRAPER, Esq., of New York,
HON. AMASA WALKER of North Brookfield.

and others, will address us on the occasion. We are also assured of a Poem,
by HON. CHARLES THURBER, of Worcester.

Dinner will be provided under a large tent, at one o'clock—Tickets, \$1.

Should any of your friends who feel an interest in this meeting fail to receive an invitation, we will be obliged to you if you will extend one to them in our behalf, as it is our wish that there should be a general attendance of all connected with Brookfield, either by birth, former residence, or marriage.

One object of the proposed re-union is to make preliminary arrangements for a Celebration of the Two-hundredth Anniversary of the Settlement of this Town, which occurs in May, 1860.

In order to make necessary preparation for the dinner, we will thank you for an early reply, (directed to the Chairman of the Brookfield Committee,) giving the names of such persons as may wish to join in the festivities of the occasion.

We add, that frequent trains of cars, upon the Western R. R. will stop at this place during the day and evening.

We have the honor to be

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servants,

AARON KIMBALL
FRANCIS HOWE
LEWIS ABBOTT
S. W. BANISTER
PERLEY STEVENS
LUTHER STOWELL
OLIVER C. FELTON
CALVIN JENNINGS
OTIS HAYDEN
EMMONS TWICHELL
ALFRED RICE

AMASA WALKER
DANIEL WHITING
HIRAM EDSON
CHARLES DUNCAN
WILLIAM ADAMS
GEORGE H. LOWE
ROYAL PICKARD
EZRA BATCHELLER
LYSANDER BREWER
JAMES H. HILL
BONUM NYE

ALANSON HAMILTON
NATHANIEL LYNDE
EBENEZER MERRIAM
JOHN M. FALES
AUGUSTUS MAKEPEACE
EBENEZER FAIRBANKS
DAVID B. GLEASON
DAVID L. MORRIL
RAYMOND CUMMINGS
GEORGE W. LINCOLN
WARREN A. BLAIR

ANNIVERSARY OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE IN BROOKFIELD.

[From the Boston Journal, July 5, 1858.]

The town of Brookfield, in the southwest part of Worcester county, and on the line of the Western Railroad, was the earliest settled township in that county, or between Marlboro' on the East, and Springfield on the West. It was settled by a company from Cape Ann, under a grant dated May 20, 1660. In the revolutionary period, Brookfield was a town of much note in that part of the State; but though now a town of much enterprise and thrift, it has been outstripped by other towns possessing inferior natural advantages, and settled long after the date of the Brookfield grant. The old town has been divided into three—Brookfield, North Brookfield, and West Brookfield—containing a population of 2007, 2307, and 1363, respectively.

A grand union celebration of these divisions of "the good old town" was held on Saturday, the 3d instant—one object of which was to pave the way for the celebration of the two hundredth anniversary of the settlement of the town in 1660, for which extensive preparations are even now set on foot, in the collection of all interesting facts that can be gleaned from the ancient records of the town.

Many men distinguished in the various walks of life were born in Brookfield, and a large number from different parts of the county were present on this occasion.

The morning of the festival day opened very inauspiciously; and the thundering of cannon and ringing of bells awoke the inhabitants to find the rain falling, with but faint promise of cessation, without regard to the important and interesting jubilee on the programme. Much disappointment was felt, and some delay was occasioned by this; and the number of returning wanderers by the morning trains was doubtless considerably decreased. Delegations from the railroad station, and from the country around, including the American Engine Company from West Brookfield, and the Bay State Engine Company, and the Challenge (a juvenile company) from East Brookfield, were received by the Cataract Company, of Brookfield, accompanied by Bond's

Cornet Band of Boston. The churches were thrown open, and many took shelter in them until the rain was over. A flag-staff had been erected on the Common the previous day, 170 feet high, expressly for this occasion, and the streamer from its top was anxiously watched until the wind was declared to be in a safe quarter. About eleven o'clock the rain ceased, and the day thenceforward went on successfully. The word "WELCOME" was stretched across the principal street. Several other devices, which had been ordered, had not been received. At half-past twelve the procession was formed in the following order:

GEO. E. CLAPP, Esq., Chief Marshal.
Aids—Tyler Hosman and Henry L. Mellen.

FIRST DIVISION.

Bond's Cornet Band—20 pieces.
Cataract Engine Company of Brookfield, Capt. Austin H. Moulton—50 men.
Committee of Brookfield.
Speakers and guests.
Citizens generally.

SECOND DIVISION.

American Engine Company, West Brookfield, Capt. C. B. Sanford—33 men.
Committee of West Brookfield.
West Brookfield Glee Club.
Citizens Generally.

THIRD DIVISION.

Committee of North Brookfield.
President, Vice Presidents, Chaplain, &c.
Guests—Citizens Generally.

FOURTH DIVISION.

Bay State Engine Company, East Brookfield, Capt. C. K. Willard—30 men.
Challenge Engine Company, (Juvenile), East Brookfield—Capt. Emory J. Nichols—10 boys.
Guests and Citizens.

The procession marched through the principal streets, making a good appearance, and returned to the Common, where they were joined by the ladies, and from thence proceeded to the Tent, where dinner had been provided.

The Dinner in the Tent.

Yale's mammoth tent, 240 feet long and 95 feet wide, had been erected on an elevated situation near the village, commanding a fine view of the surrounding country, in which the richly cultivated farms of intervals and high land, the Quaboag river and the Podunc pond, and various interesting localities blend to form one of the richest views in the interior of Massachusetts. Dinner had been provided for twelve hundred people, and the arrangements for that number had been carried out in a highly creditable manner by Mr. E. B. Shaw of Palmer, the caterer of the occasion. Seventeen tables were arranged across the tent, besides which an elevated table in front of the Speakers' stand was provided—occupied by the speakers and invited guests. The tables were prettily laid, and amply provided with substantial provisions and ornamented with bouquets and small flags. The tent was quite extensively decorated. A line of flags was suspended from the middle of the tent the entire length. All around the outside of the tent was festooned with bunting. From the two end poles of the tent hung the following mottoes:

From the north end:

Tea Destroyed in Boston Harbor,
Dec. 16, 1763.

Port of Boston closed by the Enemy,

June 1, 1774.

Washington in command,

July 2, 1775.

Evacuation of Boston,

March 17, 1776.

From the south end:

Declaration of Independence,

July 4, 1776

Confederation of the United States,

July 9, 1778.

Surrender of Cornwallis,

October 19, 1781.

Definitive Treaty of Peace,

September 3, 1782.

The following mottoes were arranged before the speakers' stand:

"Forget not those who by their exertions secured to you the blessings of this Day."

"Our national honor must be preserved at all hazards."

"July 4th, 1776,"

(In the centre of the stand.)

"It is henceforward what the dying Adams pronounced it—'A great and good Day.'"

"Our country in all that is great and good—may her progress never cease."

The following were arranged in the rear of the speakers:

"Peace with all nations."

"John Bull and Uncle Sam—May they ever live in peace."

"Governor Winthrop, 1630—His name and fame still live."

"Washington—the father of his country."

(In the centre of the stand.)

"Our fathers trusted in Thee, and Thou didst deliver them."

"Liberty and Union, now and forever, one and inseparable."

"God be with us as he was with our fathers."

About nine hundred sat down at the table at two o'clock. This was a larger number than had been anticipated during the unfavorable weather of the former part of the day. The Blessing of Heaven upon the feast prepared was invoked by Rev. Dr. Vaill of Palmer, and the sweet tune, "Home Again," was sung by the Glee Club, under the direction of Mr. Edward Hamilton of Worcester. An hour was then very pleasantly occupied in disposing of the various dishes which made up the dinner.

The intellectual part of the feast was particularly full and pleasing. Hon. Amasa Walker, of North Brookfield, presided, assisted by the following Vice Presidents: Hon. Francis Howe, O. C. Felton, Abraham Skinner, Aaron Kimball, Esq., of Brookfield. Hon. Alanson Hamilton, Nathaniel Lynde, Esq., Ebenezer Merriam, of West Brookfield. Col. Wm. Adams, Pliny Nye, Esq., of North Brookfield. D. L. Morrill, Esq., of West Brookfield was toast master. At three o'clock the attention of the company was called to the reading of the Declaration of Independence, which was read by Rev. S. S. Hunting of Brookfield. The company then listened to the first regular toast:

The Fourth of July, 1776—The memorable day in the history of the American nation. May its anniversary never be forgotten, and may the blessings which it inaugurated for us be speedily secured for and enjoyed by *every person* who breathes the free air of heaven within the confines of this Republic.

The Band responded with "Hail Columbia."

Hon. Amasa Walker,

Of North Brookfield, the President of the day, opened the addresses of the occasion by speaking of the early history of "The good old town of Brook-

field," which was settled in 1673, long before any other settlements were made in this section of the State.

Brookfield, he said, was one of the "old towns" of the State in 1775, and accordingly took an active part in the deliberative councils of that time. She was not only well represented in the council, but she was also prepared for war. She had more gunpowder than any other town except Charlestown (the amount was three barrels) when the war broke out, and more firelocks than any other town except Lancaster. Brookfield was not lacking in patriotism to make use of her means of defense. Some interesting statistics were given of the means of defense existing, at the time of the Revolution, in the various towns. In 1781 there was a season which tried the patriotism of the people more than any other. When the war was still raging, and when the general government could not raise money to support the troops, the towns and parishes were appealed to, and responded nobly to the appeal. The precinct of Brookfield voted to tax themselves 1080 pounds sterling to support twelve soldiers for three years. Corn, at that time, was worth only 2s. 8d. per bushel.

The names of some of the noble officers and soldiers from Brookfield were honorably mentioned. There was a man living, the speaker said, who could remember when more business was done in Brookfield than in Worcester.

In behalf of the Committee of Arrangements, Mr. Walker then extended a cordial welcome to all who came to reunite in this festival. After a very honorable reference to JUDGE MERRICK, that gentleman was introduced to the audience.

Remarks of Judge Merrick.

In commencing he thanked the President, and through him those present, for the kindness with which he was received back again to his old home. Whatever reason there had been for any who had re-united here to-day, to leave homes once lighted by paternal love, they could never be forgotten. However absorbing or exacting a man's business was, these old memories lasted as long as he retained his senses, and sometimes survived them. They who had invited those present to come here to-day, could readily appreciate their feelings when they returned to these old familiar places—coming to associate with those who had associated with their fathers, or those who had taken their places in the town. The welcome extended to them would always be cherished in their hearts—not as a formally arranged festivity, but as a renewal of those associations, begun in youth, which had been so long broken.

Assembled as they were on the day of our national independence—surrounded by the flags of the country, and mottoes which spoke of its emancipation from a foreign yoke, topics of a national character could not be well avoided. Since July 4, 1776, this day had been regarded with joy and celebrations. As the revolving years have brought around this day, its praise had been sounded from countless mouths over all this vast country. Many rancorous political contests had been waged, and many dangerous sentiments had been allowed and recognized; but on this glorious day all had united in sentiments for the perpetuation of this country, complete and inseparable.

Succeeding generations had celebrated the day with excitements and loud acclamations, and it was well they did. The day, whose anniversary was thus celebrated, was not a day of pomp and ceremony. It was no time for that, then. It was the time for action. But the extent of our country and its various institutions, need all the warmth of patriotism to bind it together.

All, with the exception of a few who preferred to be slaves rather than freemen, united in the maintenance of the same great cause. Commerce, agriculture and the arts united together. Towns which had become opulent by trade contributed and assumed the expenses of the war of the Revolution. This was not all; the poor gave also—casting their whole living into the support of liberty. Historians had embalmed the memory of many of the prominent actors in the great cause, but the acts of their companions who had shared equal dangers with them, but in less prominent positions, were being lost to us, in a particular sense. There had been but little dissimilarity in the origin of the great actors of the American Revolution. Putnam went up with the soldiers who had plowed with him in the same field—uneducated, but bearing as brave a heart as was ever carried into battle. Greene, in his early life, was familiar with the forge in his father's blacksmith shop. Washington followed the occupation of a land surveyor. Brookfield, said the speaker, herself had produced patriotism more valuable than all the auriferous sands or seductive placers of gold piled up in the mountains or existing in the valleys of California, or of the world! Brookfield was ahead of the other towns when the Revolution broke out. The audience had been told that it had three barrels of powder when the war commenced, and it always kept it "*dry*," and was ready to use it. (Applause.)

The history of the town, except in ecclesiastical and parochial matters, was but imperfectly recorded, but the speaker was glad to learn that the reapers in this harvest of living history were already girding themselves to bind up the sheaves. Who shall say what names shall grace that page of our history. Let the work be done as faithfully as its importance demands. The names of Ward, Appleton, and Fiske, leaders in our Israel, will figure there. These considerations should be deferred till that more appropriate occasion, the two hundredth anniversary, which would soon be celebrated, when the children of these noble men would pay their dearest tribute to their fathers' memory. But these considerations would press upon us now as we hear mentioned the honorable names now represented here, and those that had been sent abroad. From Plymouth Rock to the Golden Gate of the Pacific, there could hardly a place be found where some representative from this old town had not rested, and assisted in establishing the institutions of our country. In other lands they have stood alone, and nobly represented our nation. They have flung out the flag of the country, and defended it from its enemies. Whatever may have been the occupation of their lives, wherever their lots had been cast, they would deeply sympathize with the present residents of Brookfield in their veneration of its ancient honor—and when the proposed centennial celebration was held, they would return to unite their voices with them in its praise.

In conclusion Judge MERRICK offered the following sentiment:

Brookfield—*Brookfield as of Old*. Peace be within thy walls and prosperity within thy gates forever.

Second regular toast:

The Memory of our Departed Patriots and Statesmen. Their characters were upright and manly—their motives were pure as the sky above them. Their fame is co-extensive with the universe. May future generations emulate their virtues, practise their precepts and pay homage to their minds.

In response to this sentiment, a dirge was performed by the Band.

Third regular toast:

The Constitution and the Union. May the wisdom which framed the one and the patriotism which secured the other, by the Fathers, be perpetuated in the sons, so that the inheritance which was bequeathed to us may be maintained, the pride of the people, the glory of the age, and the example for the world.

Hon. WM. APPLETON of Boston was expected to be present and respond to this sentiment, but disappointed the audience in not being present.

Fourth regular toast:

The Sons of Brookfield. Where success is honorable, there is no such word as *fail*.

A letter was read from Hon. SIMEON DRAPER of New York, in response to this sentiment. He had been unexpectedly detained from participating in this celebration by urgent business. The spirit of the letter was accordant to the words of the toast, and was highly congratulatory and eulogistic in its character.

"Auld Lang Syne" was then sung by the Glee Club, with excellent effect.

Fifth regular toast:

The Patriots of Brookfield in 1776—They showed their patriotism no less by their *self-denial* at home than by their *bravery* on the battle field.

Hon. DWIGHT FOSTER of Worcester, descended in the second generation from Brookfield, which was the residence of his grandfather, the father of the late Hon. A. D. Foster of Worcester, responded. His ancestry, he said, had lived here, and their graves were here, and so familiar was he with the places of interest in this old town that he felt he had as good a right here as any one. He referred to the ancient history of Brookfield, reading from an old record of the town, of curious interest, showing the great interest and zeal which this town exhibited in all its meetings during the struggle of the Revolution. He then offered for a closing sentiment:

Our Forefathers of the town of Brookfield—May we cherish their memory, imitate their virtues, and equal their characters.

Sixth regular toast.

The Veteran Schoolmaster of 1792 present with us on this occasion.—He has probably taught and flogged more Brookfield boys than any other man that ever lived. The remarkable success of his scholars in after life shows that his instructions were good, and his discipline judiciously applied.

The veteran schoolmaster, Mr. RUFUS DODGE, who is 85 years of age, then stood up and showed himself to the company. Mr. CARY of St. Charles, Mo., GEO. HOWE, Esq., of Boston, and WM. HOWE, Esq., of Brookfield, responded briefly.

Seventh regular toast.

The President of the Massachusetts Senate—A distinguished descendant of one of the most ancient and most respected families of the old town of Brookfield. He has served in the councils of the nation and in the legislative halls of the Commonwealth, in both with the fullest approbation of his fellow-citizens.

This was briefly responded to by his cousin, HENRY UPHAM, Esq., of Boston.

The eighth regular toast—was complimentary to the clergy of Brookfield—their learning, piety, success and longevity.

This toast was prepared for Rev. Dr. SNELL of North Brookfield, who last Sunday preached his sixtieth anniversary sermon. He was not able to be present, and the sentiment was responded to by Rev. C. CUSHING, his colleague. Four pastors were named whose aggregate pastorate had been 194 years. The remarks of this speaker were particularly impressive.

Ninth regular toast.

The late Senator from the County of Middlesex—A descendant from one of the most talented and brilliant families that ever lived in Brookfield. We congratulate Newton and that county upon their adoption of one of our sons.

This sentiment was happily responded to by the gentleman so warmly alluded to, Dr. HITCHCOCK of Newton. He spoke of the county and town of which he was a resident—of its history and chivalrous deeds. He spoke of the marked devotion which Newton showed to the cause of liberty in the struggle of the Revolution. There, he said, labored the Apostle Elliott; there were the best theological institutions, the best schools, the best young ladies' seminary, the best ministers, the best physicians, the best lawyers, the best farmers, the best mechanics, the best firemen, the best neighbors, which can be found on the face of the globe. Notwithstanding all this, after so long an absence he joyfully returned to greet his loved friends in his native town. For him nature had never spread out such inducements as in the days of old, in this goodly town. He was unable to visit them often; other cares and duties occupied his time; but he loved to think, wherever he was, of this place and those dear friends whom a kind Providence had so signally blessed.

In conclusion, Dr. HITCHCOCK said:

"We have to-day visited these spots where our ancestors and kindred sleep in peace. They have crossed the river of death. In some instances, hardly a broken slab, half legibly inscribed, tell us where they repose. How silent their resting places! So it will be with us, for we are soon to follow. We are, like them, to bid a last and long farewell to loved ones. The cold sweat of death will be upon our brows; the glazed eye will be unable to recognize;

the palsied tongue will be speechless; and these hands cannot return the gentle pressure of the idols of our hearts. When that hour shall come may we be ready, so that the cold stream of death shall be to us but a rill, and may the sweet music of heaven break upon our enraptured ears, destroying even the sting of death."

An original ode to science was then sung by the Glee Club, which contributed largely to the pleasure of the occasion by its sweet music.

The celebration was eminently successful and satisfactory, notwithstanding the bad weather of the morning, and the clouded sky all day. Much credit is due to the following named gentlemen, the Committee of Arrangements, by whose energy and enterprise the affair was rendered so decided a success: Geo. E. Clapp, Esq., Geo. W. Johnson, Esq., A. H. Moulton, Charles Fales, Joel Bartlett, Tyler Hosman, Wm. H. Montague, Stillman Butterworth, Henry L. Melken, George Forbes and Pliny Doane.

The great kindness and hospitality shown to our reporter merits his warmest regard, and speaks nobly for the citizens of "the good old town."

THE BI-CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION.

The Celebration of 1860 was announced to the public by the Circular following:

BROOKFIELD, MARCH 15, 1860.

DEAR SIR: The present year marks the Two Hundredth Anniversary of the Settlement of this Town, and it is thought desirable and proper that the event should be commemorated in a suitable manner.

A general meeting of the citizens of the several towns into which the ancient town of Brookfield has been divided, has been held, and the undersigned appointed a Committee to make arrangements for the occasion, and invite the attendance of all who may feel an interest in it.

We therefore respectfully extend to you an invitation to be present on the Fourth of July next, the day fixed upon as on the whole the most eligible and convenient.

The committee are especially desirous that all who originated in, or have been residents of this place, should join in this Celebration.

The Sons and Daughters of Brookfield are scattered far and wide in all the States of the Union; but the Committee trust they will be happy to come together on an occasion so fraught with interesting associations and reminiscences.

The first settlement having been made in that part of the old town now incorporated as West Brookfield, and the site of the first Meeting House, the old garrison which stood successfully the Indian Siege of 1675, the Gilbert Fort, and the first Grave Yard being also in that section, the Committee have decided to hold the proposed celebration in that town. REV. LYMAN WHITING of

Providence, R. I. has been invited to deliver the Address, and every effort will be made to give interest to the occasion.

A large tent will be erected upon the Common, in which the services will be held, and the dinner be provided.

Tickets to the Tent and Dinner, one dollar.

We have the honor to be,

Respectfully,

Your Obedient Servants,

AARON KIMBALL,
FRANCIS HOWE,
O. C. FELTON,
EMMONS TWICHELL,
LUTHER STOWELL,
A. H. MOULTON,
GEO. W. JOHNSON,
H. L. MELLEN,
GEO. FORBES,
PLINY DOANE,

WM. ADAMS,
EZRA BACHELLER,
CHARLES ADAMS, JR.,
HIRAM CARRUTH,
PLINY NYE,
AMASA WALKER,
BONUM NYE,
E. D. BACHELLER,
T. M. DUNCAN,
G. B. DEWING,

ALANSON HAMILTON,
NATHANIEL LYNDE,
ALFRED WHITE,
JOSIAH HENSHAW,
BAXTER BARNES,
RAYMOND CUMMINGS,
CHARLES E. SMITH,
JOHN M. FALES,
L. H. THOMPSON,
S. N. WHITE,
G. W. LINCOLN,

The following report of the Celebration, is copied from *The Massachusetts Spy*, July 6, 1860.

The morning of Wednesday July 4th, opened with heavy, foreboding clouds, which however, "in honor of the day," soon broke, and the sun looked down with gladness, shedding splendor on the whole day and scene.

The decorations of Col. Beals were hung around in great profusion, making the whole village, with its neat dwellings, its rich shadowy elms, and luxuriant maples, radiant with bunting, parti-colored flags, national emblems and devices. The new Town Hall was bedecked with flags and streamers, and on its broad front were displayed a large equestrian design representing Washington, with the goddess and cap of liberty on one hand, and the blind goddess of justice on the other, while below were arranged the coats of arms of various of the states. Across all the principal streets were displayed flags of all colors and devices, conspicuously displaying the word "Welcome" at each entrance of the village, and across from the Town Hall was the inscription, "Welcome Home, Sons and Daughters of Brookfield."

Many private dwellings were decorated with flags and evergreen wreaths, as well as patriotic mottoes, most conspicuous among them being the old tavern opposite the Town Hall, with the inscription, "Hitchcock Tavern, 1760." The Wickaboag House, near the depot, was also tastefully decorated.

The citizens of West Brookfield proceeded at 9 o'clock, under the escort of the Oakham band, to Foster's Hill, the site of the first fortification, where they were met by the citizens of North, South, and East Brookfield, with the Brookfield Cornet band, and marched to the common. Here the final procession was formed, with S. D. Cooke as chief marshal, and marched through the village to the grounds of E. B. Taintor, Esq., where, entering under a tasteful birch, bearing the inscription, "Brookfield incorporated 1660," they

proceeded by the lane, which was formerly the old stage road, to the old burying ground, near the entrance of which stood a monument inscribed:—

"Erected in memory of John White, Joseph Kellog, Stephen Jennings, Benjamin Jennings, Ebenezer Hayward, and John Grosvenor, who were killed by the Indians, July 20, 1710."

Thence the procession returned across the old Baldwin place to the street, under an ornamental arch inscribed, "1660. The day we celebrate. 1776," with the word "Welcome" on the reverse.

Arriving at the large tent, which was set up at the east end of the common near the old Fisk store, the large company entered and completely filled the tables, which had been set for twelve hundred, leaving a large margin for outsiders who did not care to participate in the dinner.

The meeting being called to order, AMASA WALKER, Esq., appeared as president of the day, and introduced the venerable Rev. Dr. JOSEPH VAILL of Palmer, who invoked the divine blessing.

The gathered host then spent a half hour in doing justice to the ample viands spread before them by the caterers, Messrs. Cummings and Crowell.

The platform was appropriately arranged with evergreen mottoes and devices, and set out with bouquets, which also ornamented the long tables.

Conspicuous on the platform was a banner having on one side a sketch of an ancient meeting house, with a gathering Sunday crowd on foot and on horseback, in the olden style, with the inscription, "Church of our Fathers." The reverse bore a sketch of the Indian attack on the fortified house in 1675, with the inscription, "Attack on the Last House," and "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Other inscribed banners, which had been borne in the procession, were conspicuously displayed in different parts of the tent.

Upon the platform sat quite an array of the old sons of Brookfield, with gray and silvered locks, which formed a dignified and touching picture to the view of the audience.

The edibles being disposed of, the president of the day, Mr. Walker, offered in eloquent terms, a welcome to the sons, daughters, and former residents of the old town, to this historical reunion. Then recurring to 1660, he said it was the time of the restoration of the Stuarts, one of the darkest and most gloomy in English history. Louis XIV. was just entering upon his brilliant but desperate career in France, and this, when the cause of liberty in Europe seemed hopeless, the early settlers of New England were planting the institutions of freedom in the new world. This settlement was not the mere outgrowth of a crowded civilization, but an independent establishment; it was a vine planted in the wilderness. There were no settlements within thirty miles, Lancaster in the east, and Springfield in the west, and this was made half a century before any nearer was attempted—fifty-seven years before Brimfield, the first after, and eighty-nine years before Oakham, the next, while the proud city of Worcester was still a swamp, and Leicester hills were covered with wild forests. The great reasons why this was made so early a point for settlement, were, first, this beautiful plain was open and clear of

trees, and all ready for the culture of the husbandmen; second, the broad and beautiful meadows offered ample supplies of grass and hay for their stock; and third, the beautiful ponds, rivers, and brooks, were amply stocked with fish, for their earlier and later wants.

Remarking further upon the ancient glory and importance of this town, above others near it, Mr. Walker introduced the Orator of the day, a native of North Brookfield, the Rev. LYMAN WHITING of Providence, R. I.

The Orator opened with an eloquent welcome to the gathered sons and daughters. Thence passing on, he reviewed the attractions of the place for early settlement, and sketched the recorded history of its occupation. He called attention to the fact that it was largely the Saxon desire for landed possessions that led these settlers into this wilderness, really a land speculation, that led the western emigrants of that day to locate in this western reserve, in the place of pushing further into the distant Illinois of the Connecticut valley. He dilated in eloquent and glowing terms upon the heroism and daring that led these settlers to locate at the chief seat of so warlike and fierce a tribe of Indians as were the Nipmucs.

He then brought in record the various interesting historic facts and incidents connected with this settlement, such as the grant to the original company from the General Court in 1660, the deed from the Indians in 1665, and the memorable and fearful events of the King Philip war in 1675, the terrible events of which, as they transpired in detail on this soil, he portrayed in graphic and telling periods, with occasional bursts of impassioned eloquence.

After this he came to the earliest sacred records of the town in its organic capacity, holding up a dilapidated manuscript leaf containing the first record extant. He also exhibited an original deed of land from Ebenezer Scott and William Scott of Springfield, to Thomas Barnes of Brookfield, in 1703, addressed "To all Christian People to whom these presents shail come," as the earliest surviving deed of land in this town.

In reading extracts from the early records, many of historic interest were given, and many of curious quaintness; many of them showing the historic characteristics of the early churches, and the history of the various early clergymen of this town, which he brought to the present generation, this history being quite full and complete.

The following is a specimen from the town records of 1721:—"Voted to build good strong plain seats in ye body of ye meeting house."

The speaker then reviewed the prominent men who in early days were located here, speaking of the Dwights, the Uphams, the Fosters, and others, attributing to Mr. Upham the building of the first woolen mill on the continent, and dwelling at length upon the virtues and meritorious characteristics of Hon. Jedediah Foster, and his descendants, to the late Hon. A. D. Foster of this city.

He then came to the records of the Revolution, which are full of patriotic transcripts, one of them calling on "all the world to witness our indignation at the importation of tea to be peddled out among us, which is a more deadly

poison to our political and moral constitutions than ratsbane is to our physical."

A year and twelve days before the Declaration of Independence, this town voted to sustain the Colonial Congress, if they should vote to dissolve their connection with the mother country.

A few specimens of the "Moral and Political Telegraph, or Brookfield Advertiser," which was published a few years, commencing in 1794, was exhibited—one of them in 1796, advocating the project of a canal to Providence, and suggesting that books be opened for subscription, among other places, at Worcester.

Also a copy of "The Political Repository or Farmers' Journal," Volume 3, Number 180, published at Brookfield, March 31, 1801, was held up to view.

The oration, which occupied nearly two hours, was full of historic facts of great value to all interested in the town as well as to the antiquary, and occasionally leaving dry details, the orator brought out many glowing eloquent passages, and closed with an eloquent tribute to the three venerable clergymen who were so near contemporaneous, and who each lived to preach to the churches of their first love their half-century sermons, Rev. Mr. Stone of South Brookfield, Rev. Dr. Snell of North Brookfield, and Rev. Dr. Fiske of New Braintree, quoting, as a finale, some beautiful lines of Bryant appropriate to such an occasion.

Arrangements were made for the publication of this valuable history of the town.

Blanks were distributed through the audience, to be filled out with the names and other statistics of all the sons and daughters present, for publication, with the address and other proceedings of the day.

George W. Lincoln, Esq., the toastmaster, then read the sentiments as follows:—

The Perils and Sufferings of the Early Settlers—The price paid for our civilization and freedom—we will not forget our obligations.

Brookfield—Forty-five years under tutelage, she has attained to her majority, and has greater reason than any ancient Spartan of being proud of her sons.

This was responded to by Rev. C. Cushing of North Brookfield, who gave some historic sketches of the past sons, with complimentary notices of some of the more recent sons who had distinguished themselves in business, in the pulpit, at the bar, on the bench, and in the medical profession, giving also a list of the college graduates from this town.

The Ministry of Brookfield—Noted for long life and long pastorates; may their successors emulate their virtues, and receive in like measure the blessing of their Lord.

Responded to by Dr. Eliakim Phelps of Philadelphia, forty years ago pastor of the first precinct church. (West Brookfield,) eloquently setting forth the duties and influence of the ministry, and the importance always set upon it by the inhabitants of this town.

The Three Brookfields—Like the three graces, all beautiful, and so much the more for the contrast and variety which they present; may they never cease to vie with each other in all useful and honorable enterprise, as well as in rendering more and more attractive their homesteads and villages.

Responded to by N. B. Chamberlin, Esq., of Boston, (a native).

By E. W. Bond, Esq., of Springfield, (a native):—

The Tri-Centennial Anniversary of the Settlement of Brookfield—May it dawn upon a people as eminent for their virtues, their noble and heroic qualities, as the people of the first and second centuries in its history.

The System of Free Schools, established by our Fathers—It opens a straight and unobstructed pathway from the threshold of every abode, however humble, to the highest places of usefulness, influence, and honor.

Responded to by Rev. Mr. Burr of South Brookfield, sketching the history of the free schools of New England, complimenting the early connection of the schools with the church, and regretting the tendency to separation therefrom.

Our National Banner—Wherever on the earth's surface the eye of the American beholds it, may he rejoice and have reason to bless it; on whatever spot it is planted, there may freedom have a strong foothold, humanity a brave champion, and religion a pure altar.

Rev. C. M. Cordley of West Brookfield, pastor of the original Brookfield church, responded in historic and patriotic reminiscences, and instruction as a religious civilian. He spoke of the number of members of this church who had fallen at various distant points of battle in the struggle for the establishment of the nationality of this flag, and closed by expressing the hope that it may soon wave over all the inhabitants of the land, as free citizens, whether black or white.

A letter was here read from Hon. P. Merrick (a native), regretting his detention by ill health from this celebration.

The following letter was also read:—

BOSTON, June 28, 1860.

Gentlemen—Your communication, inviting me to attend the two hundredth anniversary of the settlement of the town of Brookfield, would have been sooner replied to, but for the hope that I might be able to accept your invitation, which I am compelled to decline.

I have known but little of Brookfield or its inhabitants since my childhood, yet I feel much interested in the place of my nativity, and where rests the mortal remains of my much beloved and respected father.

Very sincerely yours,

WM. APPLETON.

Messrs. Aaron Kimball, Francis Howe, and others.

N. B.—I enclose a check for one hundred dollars, which please apply toward the expenses of the celebration.

Our Boy, East Brookfield—A promising minor, destined soon to come to his rights; he bids fair to make a vigorous and honored member of the old family of Brookfields.

Our boy "Warren," who left his Parent and set up for himself in 1741.—He might have been a little wayward in his youth, but he makes a likely man, and does honor to the present age.

Responded to by T. M. Duncan of North Brookfield, in prose and verse.

A Pure Church, and Free Schools, and a Government responsible to the People—These were the great ideas which brought our fathers to New England, and our greatest honor will be to have aided in the development of these institutions.

Rev. W. H. Beecher of North Brookfield spoke to this, speaking of the necessary result from and connection with the free schools of a free church, and a free government responsible to an intelligent people.

Shattoockquis, the Indian Chief, who sold Quabouy to Ensign Cooper for three hundred fathoms of Wampum—He doubtless thought he made a good bargain with the white men at the time, but if he were here, to-day, he could not buy it back for twice the money.

By Wm. B. Draper, Esq., of New York, (a native).

Brookfield Two Hundred Years Ago—Then only *one* town, now divided into *three*; may they henceforth become as one in all that elevates humanity.

The Early Settlers of Brookfield—The light that on their heads two hundred years have shed, shall ne'er grow dim.

By Dr. John Romans of Boston, a native:—

The Ancient Town of Brookfield—In the period of our Revolutionary struggle, distinguished for her patriotism, and for her liberal contributions to the relief of her distressed fellow-citizens, and always honored in the industry, enterprise, and intelligence of her sons and daughters, at home and abroad.

The Three Christian Pastors of the Last Century in Brookfield—Ephraim Ward of the West Parish, Micah Stone of the South, and Thomas Snell of the North—three shining lights. Two of them are already placed in the upper temple, one still burns with the golden glow of a saintly old age.

Dr. Jabez B. Upham of Boston here made a brief speech, giving some interesting reminiscences of the Upham family, for a long time so prominent in West Brookfield, and closed with the following sentiment:—

Our Descendants, the Sons and Daughters of Brookfield One Hundred Years hence—May they incline to hide, with the mantle of all-covering charity, the sins, negligence and ignorance, of this our day and generation.

Master Ranger, the Last Surviving Teacher of a former Generation—May he long live and have the satisfaction of knowing that his old pupils are behaving well.

Master Ranger, a veteran of seventy-five years, and white hair, stood up and practised his old scholar, the president of the day, in the ornament of making polite bows, whereupon Rev. Dr. Phelps congratulated him upon the proficiency of his pupil.

The Absent Sons and Daughters of Old Brookfield.

The Merriams of Springfield—The enterprising and worthy publishers of that great "American institution," Webster's Unabridged Dictionary; they are sons of whom Brookfield is proud.

By Geo. Forbes, Esq:—

Old Brookfield—She has turned out many brave boys and modest maidens, and sent them to prairie and town. May she continue year by year to add

recruits of true manhood and womanhood who shall be living epistles and proof of her worth.

Rev. Hubbard Winslow, D. D. of Brooklyn, N. Y., made a short speech.

Judge Danforth of New York, (a native,) seventy-four years absent, spoke briefly, also Deacon Josiah Cary of St. Charles, Mo., (a native).

The president here exhibited a note of the Massachusetts colonial currency numbered 5655, and dated December 1, 1772, for the amount of five shillings and four pence; also a stone pot, of Indian manufacture, of the capacity of about two gallons, which was found in the earth near the Wickaboag pond.

Conspicuous upon the desk was also a *lignum vitæ* mortar and pestle that showed a long and ample service, with a card reading as follows:—"This mortar was the property of John Howland, one of the Pilgrims, who landed from the Mayflower at Plymouth, in 1620. His descendant in the fifth generation, Southworth Howland, resided in West Brookfield for half a century, till 1843. His widow and surviving sons and daughters are present to-day.

George Howe, Esq., of Boston, offered the last sentiment, as follows:—

The Ladies of the Three Brookfields—Among whom may be found those capable of acting in the place of Victoria herself.

The band, which had through the whole afternoon interspersed their music with the other exercises, here played a parting tune, and the gathering dispersed, well pleased with the exercises, and having never before assembled, never expecting again to assemble for a centennial celebration of the settlement of this old town.

CONCLUDING NOTE.

The interval between the giving of this Oration, and the printing of it, arose from many and complicated causes;—the action of the several towns; the great war of Southern Rebellion; the author's removal to a distant state, etc. etc.

The work after all the labor and care spent on it, will come short of the expectations of many,—of none more than of the author. It is really but a thread drawn through our multiform town history; not the history itself. A volume would be filled with fragments of the great story, unwillingly left behind, as I have traversed the stern and shadowy realm of our heroic past. Who will gather and preserve these precious traditions and fragments of record? Now they are within reach. Soon they will be gone past recovery.

REV. CHRISTOPHER M. CORDLEY, sometime pastor at West Brookfield,—now deceased,—gathered for me a score of pages of capital traditions,—of forts and roads; and family legends of the GILBERT, BARNES and a few other families. They are a choice bundle of local archæology; so also, are some pages by JOEL JENNINGS, Esq., as to MASON'S KILL and FORTS, at Brookfield, etc. Also a fine sketch of his father's family, and extended notes of several other worthy households, from the pen of the Hon. AMASA WALKER. A few pages full of curiosities as to North Brookfield's early days and ways, from Hon. FREEMAN WALKER, betray him as having a rare aptitude for, and a store of that rich legendary lore, which so beautifies and enriches history. A few other scraps, like the Sybil's leaves, growing costly as they diminish, await some patient annalist. Not long will they wait.

It was my hope and purpose to edit and blend into this print, these treasures from the past; as also notices of the royal men and families who planted these towns. But that would be forming a *volume*, which was not the service to which I was called; and, selecting some families, to the neglect of others, would expose me to

the complaints of sensitive survivors. So these touching, precious and instructive local traditions, and the family genealogies, are left to some faithful lover of our truly heroic ancestry.

The substantial historic frame-work, I am happy to think, will be found in this Oration,—which, with the reverent admiration of a child toward a worthy parentage, has been, with much pains-taking drawn up, and is now fraternally presented to my Townsmen and Friends.

To those now living, I give joyous salutations for the Times in which we live; to those who shall come after, I send hopeful assurances now enjoyed, of a day radiant with the glories of which our Fathers saw only the fainter beams of its dawn. The Redeemer in whom they trusted *is strong*.

LYMAN WHITING.

Dubuque, Iowa, February, 1869.

1660.

1860.

A

BI-CENTENNIAL ORATION

MADE IN

WEST BROOKFIELD, JULY 4, 1860.

AT THE CELEBRATION OF THE

TWO HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY

OF THE SETTLEMENT OF THE

TOWN OF BROOKFIELD.

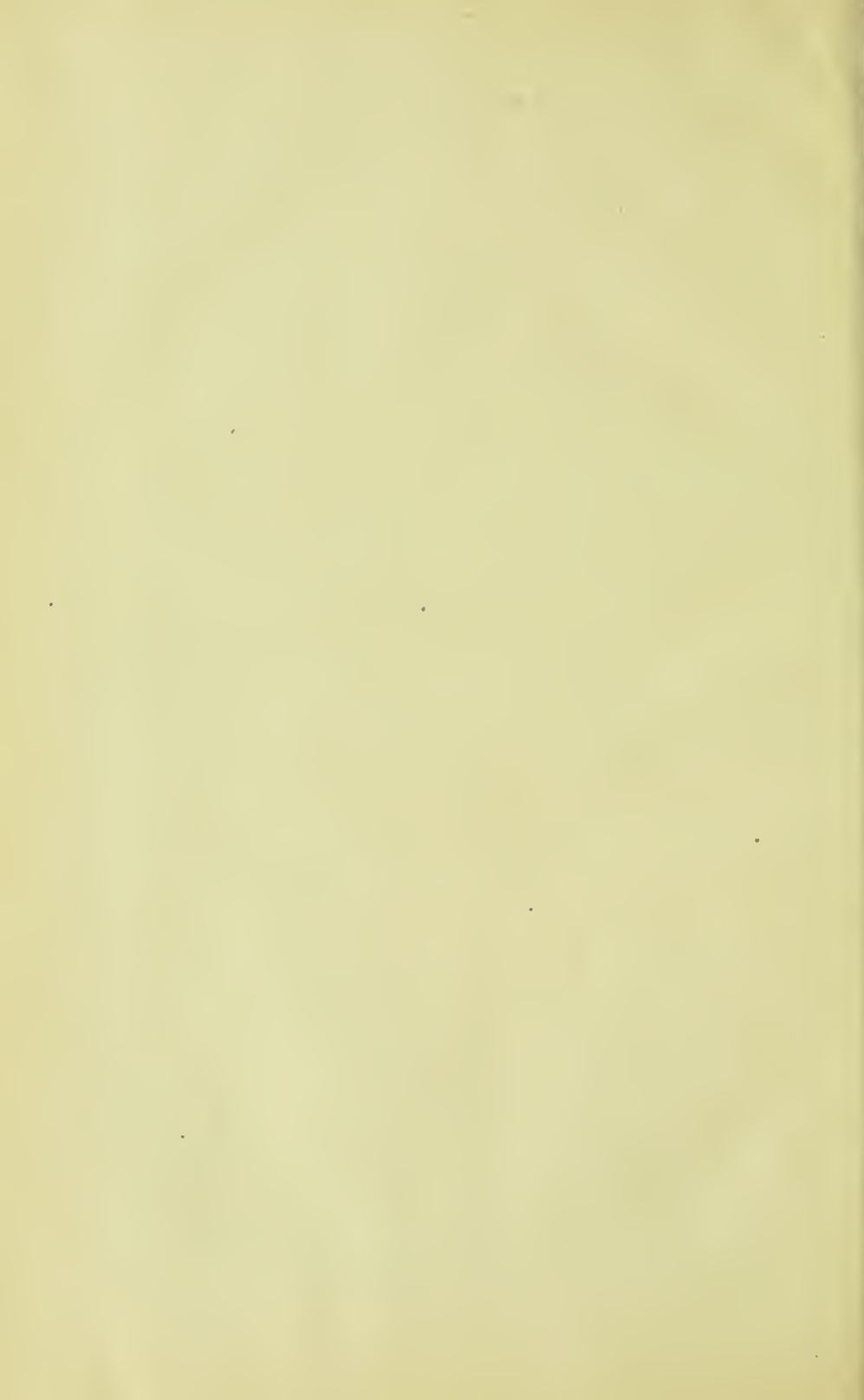
BY LYMAN WHITING, D.D.

A NATIVE OF NORTH BROOKFIELD.

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1869.

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